

THE JOURNAL

OF THE
SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES
ASSOCIATION



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THE JOURNAL

OF THE SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES ASSOCIATION



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ASSOCIATION NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SAFE CONSTITUTION

A Constitution for the Association has been prepared. If anyone would like to see it please ask.

MEDALS

People sometimes ask for replacements, or medals to which they are, or think they are entitled. It is no use applying to either the Omani authorities or the Association for them as there is now no workable system to provide them. However, the simple and effective way to get medals to which you are entitled is to go on-line to GOOGLE and put in Omani Medals. There are a number of companies that have them for sale at reasonable prices. This works well.

LONDON COCKTAIL PARTY FRIDAY 10 JUNE 2016

Last year there were only a few applicants so it had to be cancelled. It has been decided to try it again for 2016 but we need a minimum of 40 applicants to make it financially viable. If 40 names are **not received by 27 May** it will be cancelled.

ANGLO-OMANI SOCIETY DAILY NEWS CLIPS

Most week days the AOS place a news clip on the internet about events in and around Oman which are extracted from various Omani newspapers. You can sign up for this by going to project-manager@angloomanisociety.com

This is managed by Roccio Corrales, the Projects and Events Manager at AOS. I strongly recommend it for keeping up to date with what is going on in the country.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please remember to tell Neil Fawcett if you change your address, particularly email. His email address is: neil.fawcett@btinternet.com

FOR YOUR DIARY

SATURDAY 4 JUNE • SCOTTISH DINNER

FRIDAY 10 JUNE • COCKTAIL PARTY

MONDAY 13 JUNE • ANNUAL GOLF MATCH

SUNDAY 31 JULY • WESSEX LUNCH

**FRIDAY 9 SEPTEMBER
SALALAH/LADIES DINNER NIGHT**

FRIDAY 25 NOVEMBER • SAF DINNER

EWEN SOUTHBY-TAILYOUR

In the 2105 issue of the Journal in the Book Review on page 11 about 'Exocet Falklands' we said that Ewen had been in the SBS. He had not, as he explains below, which is an interesting story:

"One small correction if I may, and before the heavies stake out the farm! I was never in the SBS. I was a Landing Craft officer and although we worked a great deal with the SBS I was not one of them. I might have been as I was 'in the pipeline' but broke my leg in two places playing rugby in Bahrain three weeks before my parachute course. Incidentally that lead me directly (while convalescing) to be the first RM to volunteer as a seconded officer to SAF so there was a huge compensation for not being in the SBS!... and I never looked back."

Apologies to Ewen.

NBK

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2016 SAF ASSOCIATION DINNER

will take place in the
ARMY AND NAVY CLUB, PALL MALL, LONDON
FRIDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2016

PLEASE APPLY BY 11 NOVEMBER 2016 AT THE LATEST
To: Neil Fawcett
Two Oaks, Mayfield Fold, Burnley BB11 2RN.

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1ST DECEMBER 2016 – PREFERABLY
BY EMAIL OR ON A DISC PLEASE ***

THE 31ST ANNUAL SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES (SAF) ASSOCIATION SCOTTISH DINNER

will take place at
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SATURDAY 4 JUNE 2016

**THE 31st SCOTTISH SAF ASSOCIATION DINNER WILL TAKE
PLACE ON SATURDAY 4 JUNE 2016 AT DOUNESIDE HOUSE.**

Please contact manager@dounesidehouse.co.uk to request the 2016 tariff and to make your reservation for accommodation if you are planning to stay and indicate that you will be attending the SAF Dinner on Saturday 4th June. Many of those attending are spending at least two nights, including Friday and those having Dinner on that evening usually sit together as a group.

It is also necessary to contact the Manager if you wish to book for Dinner only (without accommodation). Please copy hastiesmith@blueyonder.co.uk into your communications with Douneside House.

For further information regarding the Scottish Dinner please contact: **Robin & Seonaid Hastie Smith:**
hastiesmith@blueyonder.co.uk

2016 SAF ASSOCIATION COCKTAIL PARTY

will take place in the
ARMY AND NAVY CLUB, PALL MALL, LONDON
FRIDAY 10 JUNE 2016

The usual eats will be provided
PLEASE APPLY BY 27 MAY 2016 AT THE LATEST
To: Neil Fawcett
Two Oaks, Mayfield Fold, Burnley BB11 2RN.

ASSOCIATION TIES

Green Ties and a few Red ones are currently available from the Membership Secretary, address on page 3. Cost is £25. Cheques should be made payable to the SAF Association or by BACS transfer to SAF Association. Sort Code 40-15-17. Account No: 72019116.

SALALAH/DHOFAR LADIES DINNER NIGHT

FRIDAY 9 SEPTEMBER, 2016

The next Salalah/Dhofar Reunion Dinner will be held at the Army & Navy Club, 36 Pall Mall, London. on Friday 9 September 2016.

If you wish to attend and are not on George Correa's database, please contact him on: georgecorrea@btinternet.com or 01722 742835.

Salaams and shukran
George

2016 WESSEX LUNCH

This year's Wessex Lunch will be on **Sunday 31 July 2016** and will take the form of a Curry Buffet at the **Sherborne Golf Club, Higher Clatford, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 4RN. www.sherbornegolfclub.co.uk** The price will remain at £25 per head, which will include curry, choice of three, with the usual accompaniments, choice of puddings, coffee, wines and other beverages from the bar. Booking requests should be sent to **John Kirkham, The Old Rectory, Oake, Taunton, Somerset TA41AR** together with a cheque made payable to: **Wessex Lunch**. If a receipt or acknowledgement is required please provide an email address or SAE. Early booking is advised as places are limited.

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Visit the SAF Association website and see 'The Journal of the Sultan's Armed Forces Association' online using the latest page turning technology. Pass the link to this year's issue on to colleagues and friends.

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COST OF OVERSEAS POSTAGE FOR THE JOURNAL

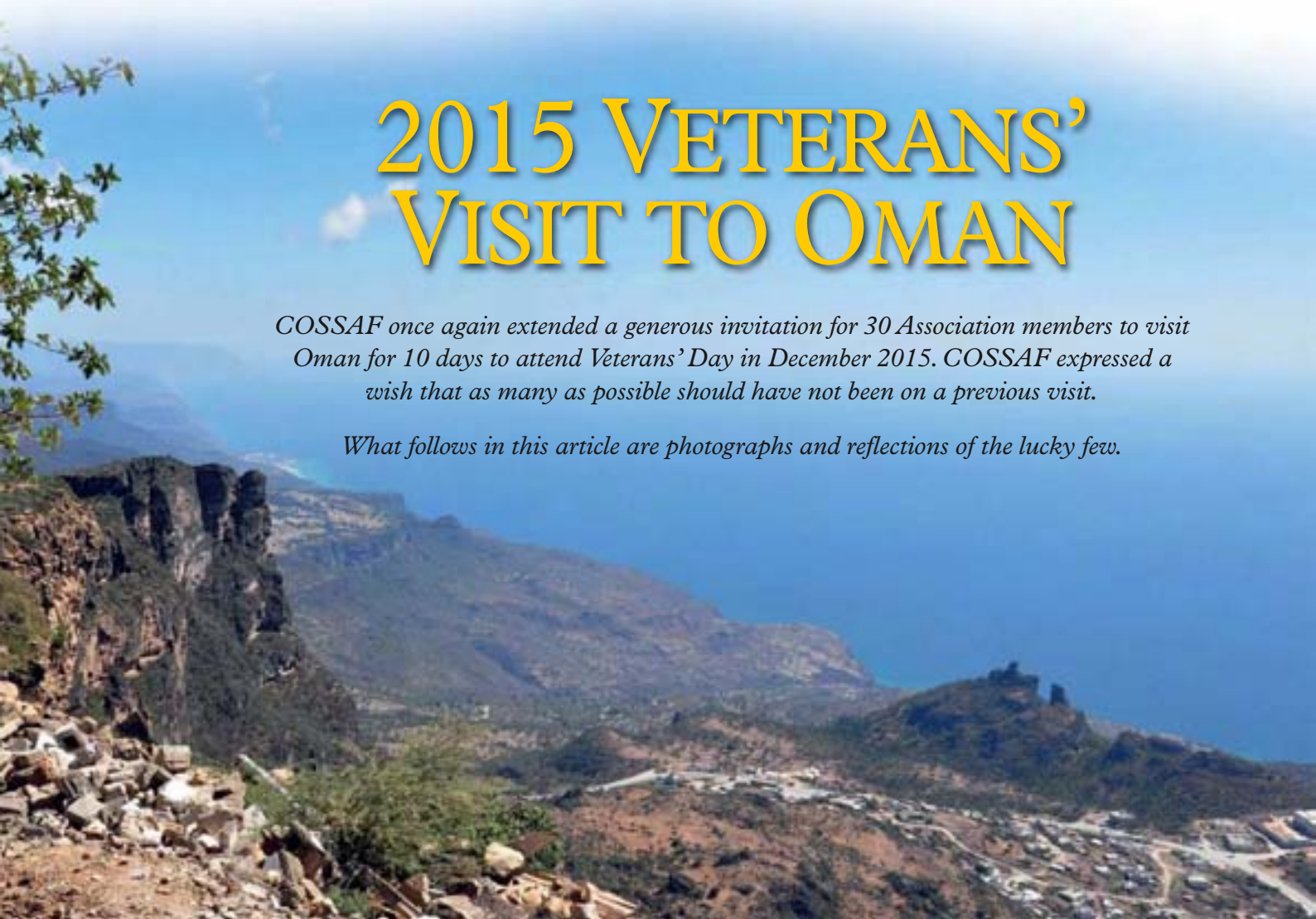
As you will be well aware the cost of posting the Journal overseas is expensive. There are 112 overseas members and the committee is considering requesting that overseas members read the online version which is on the SAF website. A hard copy would be posted to those who requested it. To help planning, would any overseas member who would not be content with this proposal please let the Hon Sec know at neil.fawcett@btinternet.com

THIS WOULD APPLY FROM THE 2017 ISSUE.

2015 VETERANS' VISIT TO OMAN

COSSAF once again extended a generous invitation for 30 Association members to visit Oman for 10 days to attend Veterans' Day in December 2015. COSSAF expressed a wish that as many as possible should have not been on a previous visit.

What follows in this article are photographs and reflections of the lucky few.



OMAN CHANGE

Peter Sichel

In early 1971, I stepped out of the hold of an RAF C130 onto the strip at RAF Salalah. Blinking in the glaring sunlight, I looked through the haze of burnt aviation fuel across the plain towards the jebel and was reminded of Mordor. I wondered what it held for me. I was soon to find out, after a bumpy ride in the back of a three tonner on a dusty track which looped to avoid the mines, to the tented camp at Umm al Ghawarif. We were soon to be on the jebel, carrying only what could be packed into a Bergen rucksack, and facing fierce opposition. The experiences of the next ten years were to change my life and attitudes for ever.



In late 2015 I stepped out of a modern airliner into a modern air terminal to be whisked through a bustling metropolis in a comfortable SUV to a four star hotel on the beach. I was able to bring everything I needed for my comfort, and I was surrounded by friendly, helpful faces. The amount of development was staggering, and most of the once-empty plain has been built on. The next few days were spent touring the jebel on sweeping tarmac roads covering distances which once would have been unthinkable.

Hedgehog Delta.



Khasab Suq 1980.

When we arrived at Khasab, the principal town of Musandam, several days later, again the changes were incredible. I had previously spent four years there from 1980, when the only modern buildings had been a contractor's office block, a small guest house and seven villas for the staff. The rest of the town construction was mud brick, the main wadi flooded annually, and a large proportion of the population had moved to the Emirates seeking work. Today, a large area in front of what had been the Governor's office in the old Portuguese fort has been reclaimed from the sea, a dam further up Wadi Khasab has stopped the wadi from flooding and helps to recharge the aquifer from which the town obtains its drinking water from six boreholes. The area in between has been extensively developed and is now a bustling centre of population as the citizens have returned.

Today Oman is a beacon of stability and security in an otherwise turbulent Middle East. An Omani friend said to me recently, "If you lot hadn't come when you did, today Oman would be like South Yemen." It was all well worth it.

SOME IMPRESSIONS

Johnnie Kirkham

The 2015 SAFA trip to Oman was the experience of a lifetime. **Ian Buttenshaw** and **Major Adil Salim al Housni** laid on, organised and ran a truly wonderful programme. Much gratitude is due to **Nigel Knocker** and **Neil Fawcett** for their efforts behind the scenes in setting up the visit and getting us there.

The outstanding and abiding memories of the trip must remain the obvious friendliness and cordiality with which we were greeted



Arrival at RAFO Salalah.



Peter Sichel and Mike Lobb meet the locals at JibJat.

2015 VETERANS' VISIT TO OMAN

everywhere by our Omani hosts, the extremely generous hospitality extended to us, meeting up with our Arab and Baluchi colleagues from the 'Old Days', and the manifest and breathtaking advances made in all aspects of Omani society, industry and infra-structure since the end of the war. The quite fantastic firework display at The Sultan's Armed Forces Day Reception, with its use of water, light, music, sound and pyrotechnics will remain a stunning life-long memory.

From Sarfait to Khasab we were feted and entertained by hosts who welcomed us with warmth and lavish hospitality. They all gave us interesting, frank



John Blashford-Snell tells of installing pump at Tawi.



COSSAF and friend take a selfie.

and objective briefings on the local situation, their own organisation's immediate mission and projections for the future.

In Dhofar we visited several of the old SAF locations from the time of the war and were treated to first hand accounts of life and action there by those who had lived and fought there. To me, of particular interest were **Charlie Daniel's** and **John Blashford-Snell's** accounts of Ashoq and the construction of the Hornbeam Line.

We were, militarily, a somewhat eclectic bunch of travellers from all three services and with a wide range of experiences. Many had



C130 flight to Khasab.



The doctor and our team of drivers at Wadi Darbat.



Khasab Castle.



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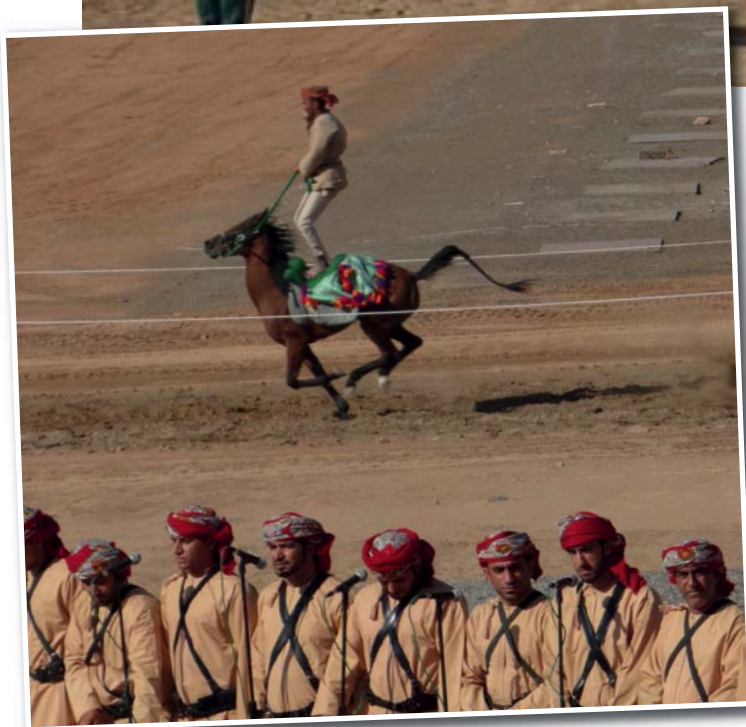
2015 VETERANS' VISIT TO OMAN

not been back to Oman since their service there, some saw service before the Dhofar War really kicked off and a few arrived after peace was declared. Some had only done their statutory time on Loan Service; some had served The Sultan for many years. Many of us only knew one or two other members of the party before we set out; others were old friends. But, you know, the astonishing thing was that within a few days we had gelled into a truly homogenous

group, with many new friends made. The words of Henry V before Agincourt come to mind: "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers".

Actually, on reflection, this applies to everyone who saw service with The Sultan in helping him to establish the base from which the country's present state of development and prosperity stems. That I was able to make a small contribution to facilitating the process makes me quietly proud.

Armed Forces' Day demos.



ARMED FORCES MEDICAL SERVICE MUSCAT

Penny Lobb in collaboration with **Colonel Ibrahim Khamis al Alawi**

It was my great honour and privilege to attend the Royal Army of Oman Armed Forces' Day celebrations at SAFTR. Thanks to the very thoughtful seating plan organised by CRAO's Office, I found myself next to Colonel Ibrahim Khamis al Alawi, a surgeon, who is acting 2i/c of the Armed Forces Hospital Muscat. We watched a superb very professional presentation, including some very loud explosions which took me by surprise, much to the amusement of the Omani officers surrounding me. It was a delight to watch talented lady members of the RAO doing frightening tricks on beautiful arab horses and plunging from the skies attached to parachutes. My kind neighbour then invited me to visit Headquarters (AFMS) Muscat and volunteered to be my guide.

For me this was a wonderful bonus in a hectic ten days of visits to Army, Air Force and Navy establishments, battle and historic sites. After a brief get together with other guests and the customary delicious refreshments, I excused myself from the rest of our group and was whisked off to AFH by **Colonel Ibrahim** and his driver. It was 29 years since I had last set foot in AFH and my goodness how things had changed.



Colonel Ibrahim Khamis al Alawi.

First of all, we visited the AFMS Training School where a mixed class of enthusiastic students was undertaking Medical Assistant training. Currently, training is to diploma level. However, within the next few years, in conjunction with Sultan Qaboos University, it is intended to implement training to degree level.



Penny Lobb with Colonel Ali Al Maaskari Assistant/HMS.

There was a warmth and camaraderie which was a joy to experience.

Moving on to HQ AFMS, what changes? To start with, the Head of Medical Services now has a wonderful suite of offices in HQ, a far cry from my old MAM days. Then we visited the hospital, barely recognisable to me after so long. Without guidance I should have been completely lost. Everything seemed more organised and purposeful. However, the most notable thing for me was the air of happiness within the hospital and the business of everyone. There was a warmth and camaraderie which was a joy to experience.

After visiting several adult wards, we entered the NICU (neonatal intensive care unit) to be greeted by **Dr Said al Kindi** (senior consultant neonatologist). He was delighted that day to have examined a one year old girl, bright and lively, who had been born at AFH, many weeks prematurely, at which time she had weighed 350 grammes. Extraordinarily, AFH now has 27 premature baby beds (or cots I suppose) which have 80 per cent occupancy and were currently being occupied by 28 week twins and a 26 weeker amongst others.



Penny Lobb with AFH Muscat Gold ward (female) staff.

We were greeted at every turn by medical students on two week rotations from Sultan Qaboos University, patients, doctors and nurses. All were so friendly and keen and proud.

The Renaissance so obvious through Oman is palpable in the Medical Service and it was wonderful to see.

ROYAL AIR FORCE OF OMAN

Kieron Shaw

The Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) demonstrated very visible and gracious support throughout the recent veterans' trip to Oman in December 2015. The use of the resplendent VIP lounge at Seeb; the comfortable flights to and from Salalah; the stylish NH 90 helicopter flights from Deefa to Ashoq on the former Hornbeam Line;

and then on to Salalah; the enthusiastic and welcoming presence of **Liwa Rukn (Tayyar) Mattar bin Ali Al Obaidani**, CRAFO, to welcome us at the Veterans' Day lunch; the flights from Seeb to Khassab and back; and finally another NH 90 flight from the Jebel Akhdar to Seeb, to ensure that we were in time for the Armed Forces' Dinner, all testified to the warmth of the welcome, the desire to ensure that the trip was a memorable experience, and the complete and impressive professionalism of the contemporary RAFO.



A visit to RAFO Salalah was arranged to enable us to see the the new and reminisce the old.





We did not have the time to see everything. We could not visit Thumrait on this occasion, or the new transport-oriented base at Masanah, let alone Adam, currently under construction to house the Typhoon from 2017. However, the visit to RAFO Salalah, after a morning visiting Taqah, the Wadi Darbat and Mirbat, was arranged to enable us to see the old and the new. We were given a special welcome by **Ameed Rukn (Tayyar) Fahad bin Ali Al Nuami**, the CO, and were given a briefing on the current role of the station and a tour. Those who remember the combined SOAF and RAF station of the 1970s, with defensive hedgehogs, the burmail revetments built around the aircraft, and the sun-bleached appearance of the buildings, would hardly recognise the modern, well-designed and equipped, busy, station and co-located civil airport of today. However, the tour did reveal that some of the original buildings and structures, including parts of the Mess, the old water tower, and some of the original RAF and SOAF accommodation buildings, still remain in use.

After the tour we were given a splendid lunch, followed by the customary halwa and coffee. Those who had once served in SOAF were then presented with impressive plaques and in return we presented an Association plaque fashioned so as to include some of the distinctive features of the new SAF Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum.

It was clear that RAFO is a professional and stylish organisation and it was most gratifying to see what has resulted from those early shared experiences. Our main memory will be the warmth of the welcome, after so many years, and the sense of mutual respect that still exists. We would like to extend our very grateful thanks to RAFO, and those who serve in it, for this special experience.

HQ SAF AND INTELLIGENCE

John McKeown

I arrived as GOS2 (Intelligence) of HQ SAF in early 1975 – straight from the Staff College (Division 3!), the colloquial Arabic course at Beaconsfield and the Joint Services Staff Intelligence Course at Ashford.

The intelligence staff function of HQ SAF was not within Bait al Falaj, but some hundreds of metres away in a compound which had once been the Airworks terminal for the old runway. The runway was still there, but disused. There was little development in Ruwi, and I was able to walk across daily to Bait al Falaj along dusty tracks with no buildings in the way. Ruwi itself had an unpaved main street with dwellings but no shops, which ran from our compound to the Al Falaj hotel – the only hotel anywhere in the area – and on to the unpaved main road between Seeb and Muscat. The only substantial building was a new telecoms facility on the edge of the old runway.

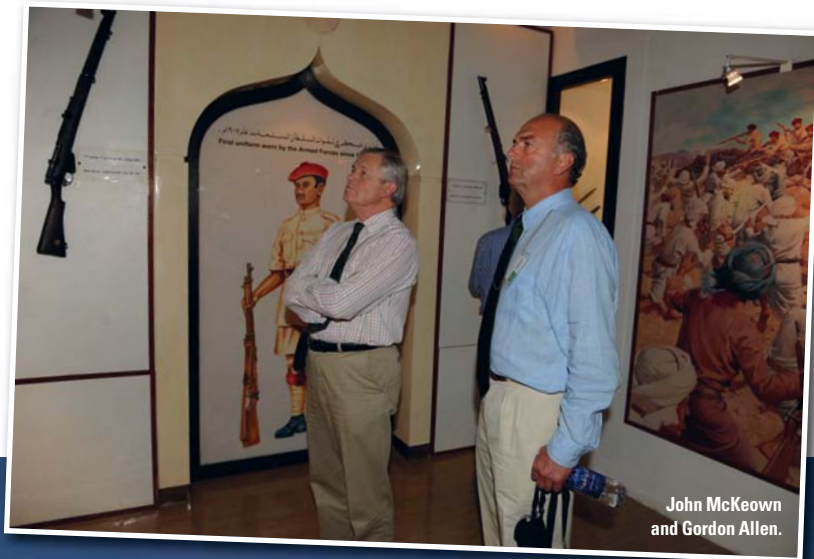
The compound was the home of the Oman Intelligence Service, becoming known as the Oman Research Department (ORD), with a total staff of about 25 officer grade personnel including the desert/district intelligence officers in stations all over the country, for example in Dhofar, North Dhofar, Thumrait, Buraimi, Rostaq, Nizwa, the capital area and other places. The compound had a few offices, a central registry, the military intelligence operations room, a club and bays for single people. I took over from **David Shillinglaw** (late Royal Tank Regiment and a fine company commander in SAF with the WB), who remained on the ORD staff. My GSO3 was **Jeremy Turner** (Royal Irish Rangers), replaced later by **Roger Luscombe** (Royal Green Jackets), and I had one Intelligence Corps sergeant (**Norman Williams**) and a confidential clerk (**Sergeant Spike Milligan** of the Middlesex Regiment). My boss in the ORD was **Colonel Tony Hazeldine**, late Royal Marines.

Bait al Falaj fort was a hugely busy HQ, big, hot, dusty, noisy and overcrowded. The corridors all had desks for junior officers and clerks lined up along the walls, leaving a narrow passage to thread through to the offices of the Chief of Staff (**Colonel Stuart Green**, later replaced by **Ken Dodson**, whose son **Mark** was the DA in Muscat a few years ago) and CSAF, **Maj Gen Ken Perkins**. I briefed the COS every day I was in the North, and saw the general regularly. The buildings around the fort were all functional, including tailors' shops as well as staff offices and accommodation, and the officers' mess which I seldom entered. The smart museum which Bait al Falaj has become is in a very different state than the old HQ!

On our recent visit, Roger and I set off on foot to try to find our way round Ruwi... and found it almost impossible. The Al Falaj hotel was one definite location, but it is considerably altered – unrecognisable. The direct way to the old compound is so built over with new, wide roads lined with shops and a large barracks completely blocking the route that we could not even find the compound. The way we walked from the compound across to the fort is also completely built over, and the old runway cannot be seen at all.

Fortunately, a couple of days later I was able, with the help of a current member of the Intelligence and Security Service (the new title of the old ORD), to find the old compound, which is now the capital area office. I could see and identify little of it – but nearby

*The smart museum
(right) which
Bait al Falaj has
become is in a very
different state than
the old HQ!*



John McKeown
and Gordon Allen.



The Fort in the 1970s.

was the house occupied in 1975 by **Mick Welsh**, an ex-SAS man on the ORD staff, and his family. The new site of the ISS near Madinat Qaboos is most impressive, and the whole of the original compound would fit within half of the new mess.

Some of the changes occurred before I left in January 1977, including the move to the new site, where I was (just) able to identify the bait that Roger and I shared. In 1976, post-war, we had started to establish properly-funded intelligence sections for the three armed services and had Omani officers in military staff positions. I handed over to **Colonel Richard Lea**, who had plenty of experience with BATT in Dhofar and had just commanded 23 SAS Regiment.

During the December visit, I tried to find the location of the grave of **Bob Brown**. Bob had been in The Cameronians. He was an unsung hero* of the Dhofar War. He had arrived as a desert intelligence officer with the first NFR deployment to Dhofar in 1964, and became the greatest source of knowledge as Principal Intelligence Officer Dhofar over the years, with very extensive contacts across

the jebel. During 1975, I stayed with him for two or three days every week in Salalah.

In the early years, he briefed **Sultan Said** on some minimal changes which might have prevented the development of the insurrection which became the Dhofar War... and was expelled from Dhofar for his trouble. He returned with the Renaissance, faithfully served **Sultan Qaboos** with whom he had served in The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), and was finally rewarded with a fine house built to his own specification in a spot of his own choice by the khawr in Salalah.

I discovered from the ISS officer, the reason I could not find his grave. Apparently, in Bob's will, he left his possessions to his staff and instructed that his body was to be cremated and the ashes scattered on the jebel. A fitting end.

**In my dissertation Britain and Oman: The Dhofar War and Its Significance, written in 1980/81, I could not use his name for security reasons. He is referred to as a senior intelligence officer in Salalah.*

HORNBEAM LINE

John Blashford-Snell

Thanks to SOAF, it was pleasant to land just below Ashoq and stroll up to the old mortchar in which I had lived for a short while in 1974 with Angus Ramsey.

It still stands proudly on that barren hill top, once blasted white by the impacts of Katyuska and other missiles. **Angus** was commanding B Coy, NFR and kindly hosted me whilst 48 Field Squadron RE was building the defences of the Hornbeam Line.

On arrival in Oman **General Sir Tim Creasey** had tasked us to create an obstacle to deter the Adoo from penetrating eastward. "It's 50 kms long and we need it to be mined and wired," he said.

Alas, there were only six carrot shaped British AP mines and a few of **Spike Powell's** homemade devices in the stores, so we flew to Cyprus to buy all HQ Near East Land Forces could spare.

General Tim gave me a huge blank cheque and remarked, "If you don't come back, I shall personally hunt you down and kill you."

Thus equipped with 15,000 coils of dannert, 12,000 metal pickets, 12,000 reels of barbed wire and 10,000 Dingbat AP mines, plus a few US Jumping Jacks we set to work.

The hundred or so British Sappers were joined by several troops of Royal Jordanian Engineers and NFR's Assault Pioneers. The Jordanians were lovely people, but their English was limited so we asked them to do much of the wiring whilst we laid the mines and some fiendish booby traps.

On the steep sided Wadi Gizalet we installed a remotely controlled flame trap, that could be detonated by **Charlie Daniel's** men in the Killi position. It was hoped this would not destroy the dannert fence. When it was eventually fired the huge ball of fire only fried a poor lost donkey! Earlier the test of a prototype at the Umm al Gharif rubbish dump had resulted in a nuclear-like mushroom cloud that caused near panic in Salalah.

The task took two months of unrelenting labour and using hi-cycle electric drills we also managed to dig some pits to make NFR's mortchars more protective.

The old metal ammo boxes we used as cupboards are still embedded in the walls. I found one where Angus and I kept some medicinal Scotch. Sadly, it was empty.

Clearly the Adoo could see us and the supporting Wessex helicopters at work, so we had to take cover a few times. However, **Johnnie Braddell-Smith**, **Ian Gardiner**, Angus and Charlie gave us some pretty effective close protection. NFR's CO, **Lt Col Bryan Ray** and his HQ Company Commander, **Mohamid Said Raqashi** did their utmost to help with labour and supplies and the job was completed by 29 June, 1974. By all accounts it worked pretty well.



BS Ramsay directing 62mm mor 1973.

Today Angus Ramsey's mortchar and several others still stand on the summit of Ashoq. They need a little maintenance, but the old metal ammo boxes we used as cupboards are still embedded in the walls. I found one where Angus and I kept some medicinal Scotch. Sadly, it was empty.

Thankfully it seems the mines have also gone, otherwise the scene has changed very little in 40 years!



BS minelaying sappers. Rebadged RAF SOAF Wessex.

KATEEBA JANUBIA (KJ)

David Bills

Douglas McCully (Bn 2i/c 75-76) and **David Bills** (OC B Coy 74-76) were the KJ representatives on the visit. KJ no longer recruits Baluch soldiers but is an Arab Regiment. As such, the Regiment rotates every few years with the other Battalions between north and south Oman. During the visit the Regiment was located back at Arzat. However, a busy schedule precluded a visit although the Arzat "Beau Geste" Foreign Legion style gates were evident as the SAF Association convoy wizzed passed on yet another memorable trip down memory lane. So we were unable to determine whether the Regiment could still boast the best Jumma Lunch parties and whether **Taylor Woodrow** had rebuilt the pool and patio.

They say that memory fades with age – but not on this trip! Tales of "daring-do" on the Jebel abounded. Battle and skirmish locations were relocated with ease despite the most impressive infrastructure – metal roads, modern buildings, IT and alternate communications and all the other trappings that make up a modern state – that now grace the Qara Mountains where tracks and bayts were before.

KJ and its companies were instrumental in securing the Eastern Area for civil development and, on Operation Kahoof, in cutting the adoo's resupply route below Sarfait which ultimately led to victory in the 10 year conflict.

Forty odd years ago KJ were deployed on Sarfait before redeploying to the Eastern Jebel. Tawi Atair, White City, Mirbat and Taqa are now modern well found towns linked by metal roads. The Wadi Darbat boasts a visitors' centre complete with boats for hire akin to the punts on the River Cam in Cambridge. Similarly, the well at Tawi Atair is now a popular visitor feature. And the restored Wali's Fort at Mirbat is a most excellent tourist centre. The Operations Room on Sarfait is now a museum. Old sangars, ammunition boxes, cartridge cases and the like can still be found on the Jebel where huge herds of well-fed camels and cattle now roam without risk of attack by Strikemasters.

KJ and its companies were instrumental in securing the Eastern Area for civil development and, on Operation Kahoof, in cutting the adoo's resupply route below Sarfait which ultimately led to victory in the 10 year conflict. The sacrifices made by the Regiment, even long after the formal end of the war on "mopping-up" operations, have not been in vain as witnessed by the hugely impressive development throughout Dhofar turning the region into a modern, prosperous state. ■

David Marks has made an outstanding, professional, DVD of the visit to Oman in December. It not only includes video of all the members who were fortunate enough to go on the trip, but important and memorable coverage of the country – from the Dhofar jebel to the Musandam, and from palaces to cemeteries. He is willing to provide copies for a donation to Service charities in Cyprus. Contact him on drmarks@cytanet.com.cy

LIST OF VETERANS

Rank / Name	Unit in SAF / Dates
ARMY	
Brig John McKeown	Int – 1975-76
Maj Clive Ward	NFR/FF – 1973-79
Lt Col Dick Clayton	OA – 1974-75
Maj Viv Rowe	NFR – 1972-74
Maj Michael Bond	NFR – 1970-71
Maj Douglas McCully	KJ – 1975-76
Capt Dan Sweeney	FF – 1975-82
Maj Charlie Daniel	NFR – 1973-75, DR-FF 1983-84
Capt Peter Sichel	BATT/Civ Development 1971-80
Capt Penny Lobb	FMS – 1983-86
Capt Dave Arkless	BATT/DR – 1971-72
Capt Roger Luscombe	Int – 1975-77
Maj Johnnie Kirkham	OA – 1970s
Maj John Micklem	ACS – 1978-80
Maj DR Marks	BOD
Col Gordon Allen	OA – 1975-77
Capt Denise Rudgley	FMS – 1987-98
Col John Blashford-Snell	RE Op Tenable – 1974
Maj Mike Lobb	BATT 1971-73, FQ 1973-76, SAFTR 1976-78, HQSOLF 1982-86
Maj Peter Isaacs	FF – 1975-78
Maj Tim Jones	JR – 1972-74
Major David Bills	KJ – 1974-76
SOAF / RAFO	
Wg Cdr Kieron Shaw	SOAF Salalah – 1974-76
AVM Tony Nicholson	3 Sqn Salalah – 1972-73, OC 3 Sqn – 1975-77
Col Nick Holbrook	SOAF 1970-73, ROP 1974-85
Gp Capt Geoff Brindle	HQSOAF – 1984-86, Gp Capt Co-ord HQRAFO – 1996-2004
Fl Lt Al Cameron	BATT x2, Hel Sqn – 1976-77
SON / RNO	
Lt Alec Johnston	RNO – 1974-77
Lt Cdr Robin Gainsford	SON – 1982-84
Lt Cdr Neil Fawcett	SON – 1980-82

Sir Terence Clarke who was 1st Secretary and Head of Chancery in the British Embassy in the early 1970s, when **Sir Donald Hawley** was Ambassador, sent the following message having seen the hedgehog picture produced by **Peter Sichel**.

How could I ever forget the hedgehogs when they provided such comforting, though sometimes pretty noisy, protection on visits to Salalah.

Here's a photo from that period (1972) which you may care to have for the SAF archives, from when **Bill Stoker** flew me up to Musandam. **Chris Gordon Finlayson** stands next to him but I'm not sure who the other guy is.

Comment by Nigel. Looks a bit like **Bentall-Warner** – but was he ever in the Musandam? Does anyone recognise who it is?



SAF VETERANS

AT JOINT SERVICES COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE, SHRIVENHAM

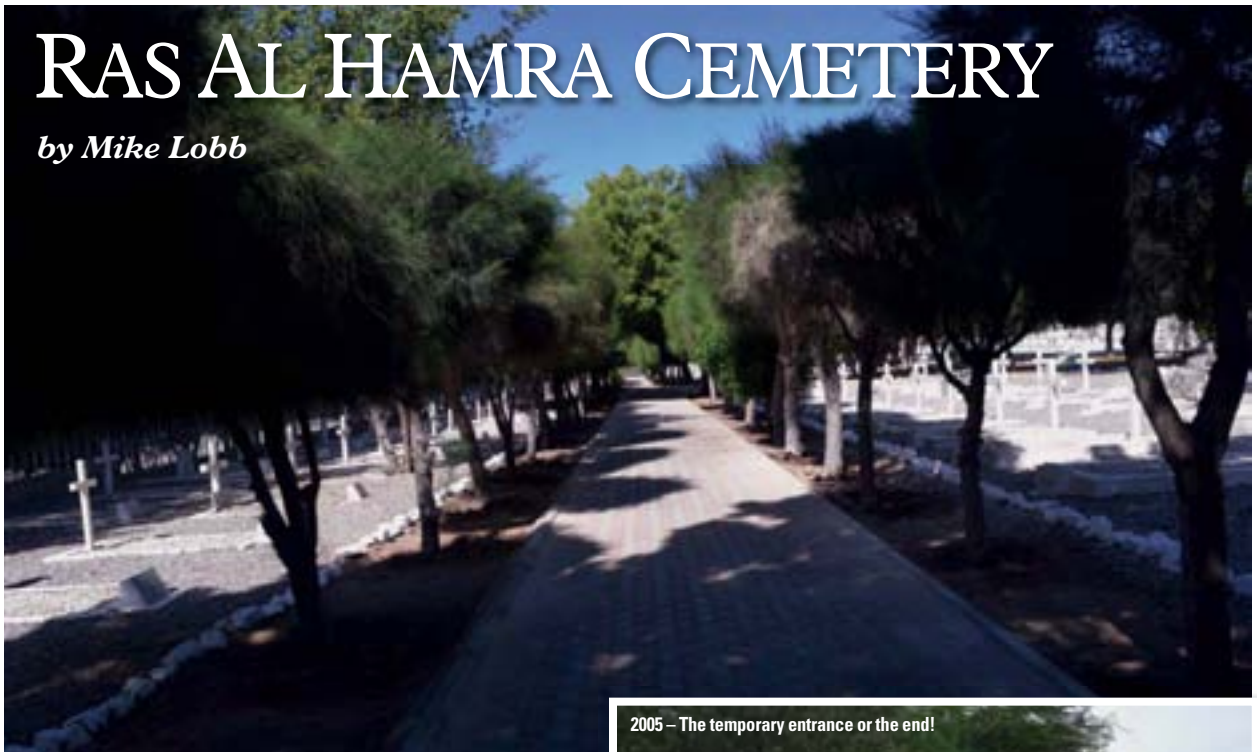
Four members of the SAF Association were among the 24 veterans invited to attend the Realities of Conflict stage of the Advanced Command and Staff Course at Shrivenham, 21-22 July 2015. They worked with the syndicates recounting their experiences in Dhofar some 40 years ago. It also gave them the opportunity to meet with

the four Omani students studying on the course. The photograph shows standing in the rear, second from right **Peter Williams** (FF), third from the left **Mike Lobb** (BATT, SAFTR and HQSOLF). Seated in the front row, fourth from the right **David Bills** (KJ) and fifth from the right **Peter Isaacs** (FF). ■



RAS AL HAMRA CEMETERY

by Mike Lobb



Pat Watson wrote the definitive history of the cemeteries in Oman in Issue 54, March 2005 of *The Journal*. This brief article does not supersede his authoritative work but merely describes the changes that have occurred specifically at Ras Al Hamra, the site of graves of those killed and who have died since 1974.

On the Association's last visit in 2010 the cemetery lay in a bare desolate wadi at the PDO complex with a line of trees within the perimeter railings. It had a stark air of serenity about it. Unfortunately, the area was scheduled for development and this was monitored by both the British Embassy and individual members of the Association on private visits.

I am pleased to record that although now in a residential area, the cemetery is completely screened by trees. Building appears to have been completed and the cemetery retains that air of serenity but now much softer with the shade that trees provide.

2005 – The temporary entrance or the end!



2015 – Arriving at the original entrance.

As one enters the iron gate, the first SAF grave on the left side is that of **Johnny Braddell-Smith** of NFR who was killed attempting to recover the body of the Wakeel from the Firqat Tariq bin Zaid in support of the Iranian Operation Nadir at 8am on Christmas morning 1974. For this action he was posthumously awarded The Sultan's Gallantry Medal.

Next there is the grave of **Peter Davies** of SOAF killed with **Nigel Marshall** and **Mike Shipley** of Jebel Regiment on 8 March 1975 when their helicopter was hit by a SAM-7.

RAS AL HAMRA CEMETERY

Right: 2015 – Tim Jones from JR and author at the gravestone of Nigel Loring. They are not forgotten.

Middle: 2005 – The author at the grave of Johnny Braddell-Smith.

Bottom: 2015 – Viv Rowe, Charlie Daniel and Mike Bond all from NFR at the same site.



Also on the left are SOAF pilots **John Heathcote** and **Roger Boyce** killed on 31 December 1975 by a SAM-7. Further along on the left is the gravestone of **Jim Fish**, serving with the Ministry of Defence Engineering Division killed on 4 November 1976 driving an ammunition truck from the north to Dhofar.

John Milling's gravestone is now shaded by trees on the left side. John was killed in a helicopter accident off Mina Fahal on 20 March 1977 whilst serving with the Royal Oman Police.

On the right side where the paths intercept is the memorial to **Nigel Loring** from the Light Infantry serving with the Jebel Regiment, killed leading his company on Operation Dharab on 6 January 1975. He was posthumously awarded the Sultan's Bravery Medal. On the other side of the path is the grave of **Colin Maxwell**, Deputy Commander of SAF who died in England on 17 August 1988 but fittingly buried in Oman, a country he loved so much and to which he gave great service. ■

OIG

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This is not a definitive history of the Dhofar War, but rather an introduction to its origins and early 1970s operations on the Jebel, directed by Tristan Ofield following a visit to Dhofar with his father in 2010.

Containing original film footage, here seen for the first time, together with interviews and opinions of some who took part in the conflict, it will serve as a reminder to those who were there, and of interest to all who have served in Oman

A somewhat nostalgic look back in time, it is an opportunity to show families what it was like forty five years ago.

Further details at www.operationoman.com or direct from Tristan Ofield, 107 Ingram Rd, Nottingham, NG6 9GP
Cost of £10 plus £2 p&p

A 'HAKA' IN DON'S HONOUR

by Peter Williams (FF 76-78)

On 9th March this year a remarkable honour was granted to a former Frontier Force officer, **Donald Charles Nairn**, when all the boys of Wanganui Collegiate School in New Zealand's North Island performed a special 'haka' in his memory.

This was the highlight of a ceremony at which a beautifully framed duplicate set of his medals was presented by his sister, **Mrs Bea Rockel**, to the Headmaster. As a prelude to this, I had given a short presentation about Don's career in 1RGJ in Northern Ireland and Cyprus during the early 1970s, and his subsequent service from December 1976 as a 'contract officer' in the Frontier Force, a Baluch battalion in The Sultan's Armed Forces.

As a 26-year old major, Don was commanding 'C' Company when on 9th May 1979 he was killed in action on the Jebel Aram in Dhofar in the follow-up to a highly successful operation during which his soldiers had shot dead three enemy 'adoo' fighters. A fourth 'adoo' fighter had holed up in one of a complex of escarpment caves, and as Don sought to identify exactly which cave to assault he was fatally wounded. His death in action was to be the last by a member of The Sultan's Army, coming as it did over three years after the official declaration in December 1975 that the counter-insurgency was over.

Don was buried in the Christian Cemetery near Muscat in Northern Oman. In the autumn of 1979 Don's parents visited



Dhofar and were looked after by his Frontier Force brother officers and met his 'C' Company soldiers. They then moved to Muscat where they were hosted by the Commander of The Royal Army of Oman and received The Sultan's Bravery Medal from His Majesty's uncle. Don had been awarded this posthumously for the successful operation during which he had so tragically lost his life.

Don's memory is treasured in New Zealand by his family, friends and fellow Wanganui Collegiate School pupils and alumni, and his framed medals, along with many documents, maps and photographs recalling his military service, are being safeguarded in the School Museum. ■



RE-DEDICATION OF THE SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES MEMORIAL

The re-dedication of the SAF Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, took place on Thursday 25 June 2015. The original memorial, dedicated in 2003, had over the years, deteriorated in response to the prevailing weather and conditions at the National Memorial Arboretum and needed replacing. The new memorial, made from marble, was fashioned and inscribed by **Ian Johnson** of Westbury advised by **Nigel Knocker**.

Some seventy SAF members and their guests attended the Service. We were joined by a number of invited relatives of some



Old Memorial.



RE-DEDICATION OF THE SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES MEMORIAL



Hermione and Mike Ruddell.



Louise Brown and Mary Sayers.

of those killed on operations in Dhofar. They were: **Louise Brown** and **Mary Sayers**, the sisters of **Nigel Loring**; **Hermione** and **Mike Ruddell**, the sister of **Johnny Braddell-Smith**; **Arlene** and **Gary Mitchell**, the daughter of **Stan Stanford**; and **Gareth** and **Michelle Keevill**; the nephew of **Stuart Rae**.



Roger and Colin blessing the new memorial.



Gareth and Michelle Keevill (Gareth is Stuart Rae's nephew).

The service was conducted by the Reverends Roger Bayldon and Colin McLean, both of whom had served in SAF. Colin had also officiated at the dedication of the original memorial.

The service was conducted by the **Reverends Roger Bayldon** and **Colin McLean**, both of whom had served in SAF. Colin had also officiated at the dedication of the original memorial, together with the late **Right Reverend Bishop Michael Mann**, the father of **Philip Mann**, who had also been killed on operations in Dhofar.

The introduction was given by **Nigel Knocker** and readings were delivered by **Tony Nicholson**, **Neil Fawcett** and **Mike Lobb**. We were fortunate in having five former Light Infantry buglers, whose presence and playing did much to enhance the occasion.



This was throughout a moving and special occasion. We all felt nostalgic and very honoured to be present with so many former comrades, with whom we had shared so much in those important early days, both in the development of Oman and in the defence of its freedom.

The service was followed by a curry lunch held in a designated room at the Arboretum. All the excellent arrangements of the Arboretum were made by **Kieron Shaw**.

Please do visit the National Arboretum and view our magnificent new and very fitting memorial. ■

SAF ASSOCIATION TEE, SWEAT AND POLO SHIRTS

For 2016 the embroidered SAF emblem is being offered in the colours of your choice. The original version is in red with black detail and lettering, but should you wish to have the design in another colour, please do specify with your order.

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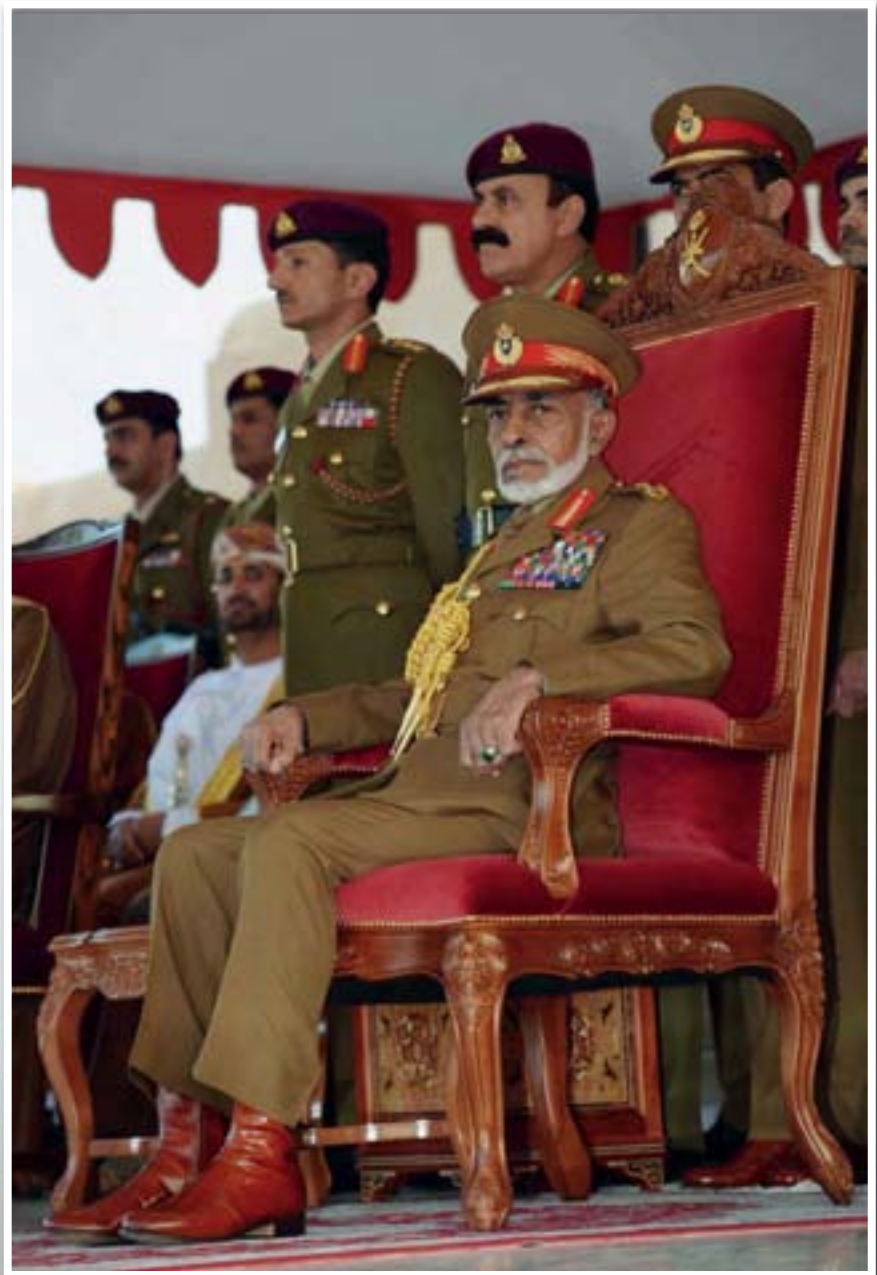
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45TH NATIONAL DAY

*His Majesty
The Sultan
attended the
ceremonial
parade at Hisn
Al Shumoukh*

Under the auspices of **His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said**, Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, the military parade was conducted on 18 November 2015 at Hisn Al Shumoukh in the Wilayat of Manah on the occasion of celebrating the 45th National Day of The Sultanate with the participation of The Sultan's Armed Forces, The Royal Guard of Oman and The Royal Oman Police.



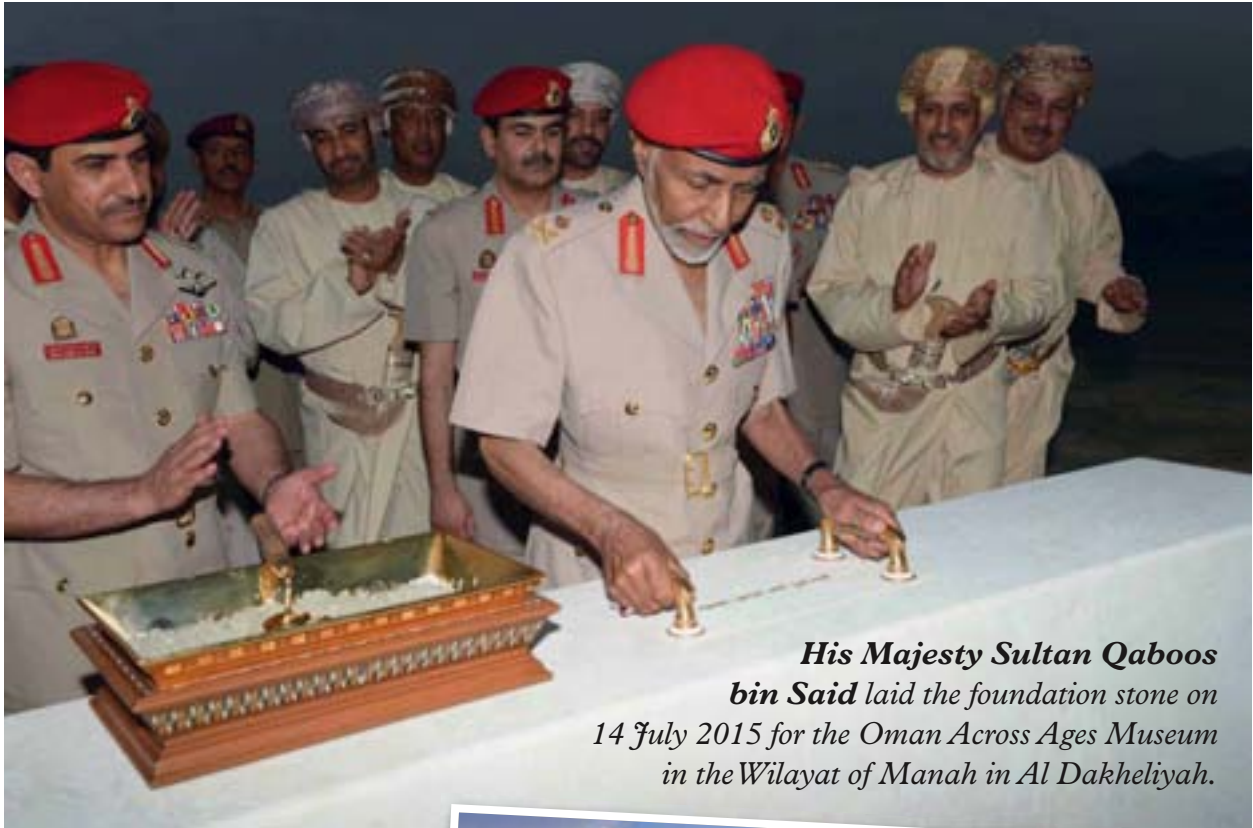
His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said conferred the Oman Military Medal and Military Glory Medal on the commanders of The Sultan's Armed Forces and a number of senior officers.



The Sultan's Armed Forces, The Royal Guard of Oman and The Royal Oman Police took part in this national occasion.



ROYAL OFFICE



His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said laid the foundation stone on 14 July 2015 for the Oman Across Ages Museum in the Wilayat of Manah in Al Dakheliyah.

The Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) celebrated on 10 November 2015 the handing over of the 5th edition of the Sultan Qaboos Award for Sailing under the auspices of **Nasr bin Hamoud al Kindi**, Secretary-General of the Royal Court Affairs.



Under the auspices of **Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani**, Minister of the Royal Office, The Royal Air Force of Oman celebrated the occasion of the graduation of the new batch of pilots and air officers and limited service officers course on 21 January 2015 at the military parade arena in Ghala Base and Sultan Qaboos Air Academy.

Assigned by **His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said**, Deputy Prime Minister, attended the official opening ceremony of the Military Technical College (MTC) on 25 February 2015.



NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE (NDC)

On 15 July 2015, The National Defence College (NDC) celebrated the graduation of the 2nd National Defence Course.

The graduation ceremony was held at the college's HQs in Muaskar Bait al Falaj under the patronage of **Nasr bin Hamoud al Kindi**, Secretary-General of the Royal Court Affairs. The occasion was attended by a number of ministers, SAF Chief of Staff, SAF Commanders and some military and civil officials.



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE



HE Sayyid Bader bin Saud bin Harib Al Busaidi, MRDA, received at his office at Muaskar Bait al Falaj, **Lord Astor**, Under-Secretary of State and the Lords' Spokesman on Defence in the United Kingdom (UK) and his accompanying delegation, on a visit to The Sultanate. The meeting reviewed fields of the existing cooperation and exchanged viewpoints on issues of common concern.



Official talks between **HE Sayyid Bader bin Saud bin Harib Al Busaidi, MRDA**, and **Michael Fallon**, the United Kingdom's Secretary of State for Defence, were held at Oman's Ministry of Defence on 4 March 2015 and 1 October 2015. The leaders reviewed cooperation in the military field between the two countries and the means for promoting them, in addition to discussing a number of matters of common concern.



As per the Royal directives of **His Majesty The Sultan**, on the importance of keeping up with the digital evolution of the world today, and taking advantage of the technical services of this evolution to boost the process of development, The Ministry of Defence and The Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) launched the portal of the Ministry of Defence called 'Sahab Project'. This also activates the e-government in various fields to enhance the international status of The Sultanate in this area and for the benefit of the people. This is in preparation for the provision of many electronic services to its personnel through the portal of the Ministry of Defence, and to the civil society of citizens, residents, visitors, interested persons, as well as government and private institutions, through the Internet.

As per the Royal Directives of **His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said**, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, shooters of the National Shooting Team, The Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) Shooting Team and the Omani Military Football Team who represented the Sultanate in regional and international forums in 2013 were honoured yesterday in appreciation for their results and achievements at their participation in international tournaments. The honouring ceremony was held under the auspices of **HE Sayyid Bader bin Saud bin Harib Al Busaidi, MRDA**.



Under the auspices of **HE Sayyid Bader bin Saud bin Harib Al Busaidi, MRDA**, The Sultan Armed Forces (SAF) Museum organised an exhibition on 14 December 2015 themed Leader Biography and Country Renaissance on the occasion of the Armed Forces Day, which falls on 11 December every year.



HE Sayyid Bader bin Saud bin Harib Al Busaidi, MRDA, laid the foundation stone on 26 March 2015 for a factory for the manufacture of light weapons' ammunition in the Wilayat of Samayil. The project whose tender was awarded to the successful contractor, will stretch over 60,712 square metres.

OFFICE OF SECRETARY GENERAL AT MOD



HE Mohammed bin Nassir Al Rasbi, Secretary General of the Ministry of Defence, received in his office, **Lord Astor**, UK Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence and Spokesman for Defence at the House of Lords and his accompanying delegation, on a visit to The Sultanate. During the meeting, viewpoints were exchanged and a number of issues of common concern were discussed. The meeting was attended by UK Ambassador to the Sultanate and the Military Attaché at the UK Embassy in Muscat.



HE Mohammed bin Nassir Al Rasbi, Secretary General of the Ministry of Defence, received in his office at Mu'askar Al Murtafa'ah on 13 May 2015 and 7 September 2015, **Lt Gen Thomas Anthony Beckett**, Senior Defence Advisor for Middle East at the UK Ministry of Defence, on a visit to The Sultanate. The meeting exchanged viewpoints on a number of matters of common concern.



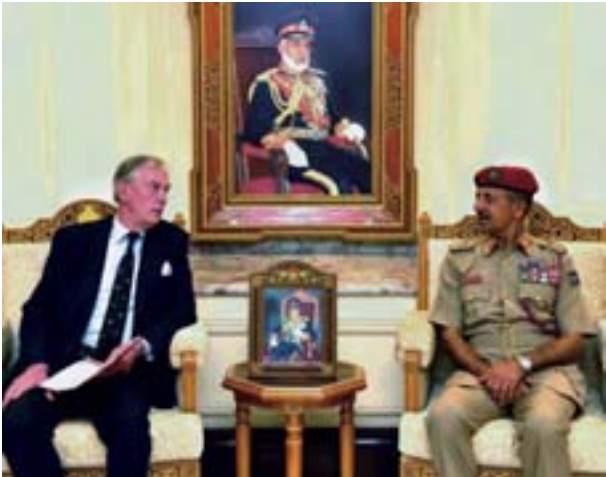
On 12 May 2015, Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) celebrated the arrival of the vessel 'Al Seeb' to the terminal of Said Bin Sultan Naval Base to join the RNO fleet. The ceremony was held at Said Bin Sultan Naval Base under the auspices of **HE Mohammed bin Nassir Al Rasbi**, Secretary General of the Ministry of Defence. The ceremony was attended by **Lt Gen Ahmed bin Harith Al Nabhani**, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) and some SAF, military, security units' commanders, senior officers and RNO personnel.

HE Mohammed bin Nassir Al Rasbi, Secretary General of the Ministry of Defence, received in his office at Mu'askar Al Murtafa'ah on 20 May 2015, **Stephen Phippson**, Chief of The British Defence and National Security Organisation and **Sophie Line**, Regional Director of the Defence and Security of Africa and The Middle East and Central and South Asia. The meeting exchanged viewpoints on a number of matters of common concern. ■



OFFICE OF COSSAF

*In all notes of the meetings that **Lt Gen Ahmed bin Harith Al Nabhani** has held with visiting dignitaries, to save repetition he is shown as COSSAF. Similarly, except where shown, meetings reviewed military cooperation between the countries concerned and matters of common interest were discussed.*



COSSAF received at his office in Muaskar al Murtafa, **Lord Astor**, Under-Secretary of State and the Lords' Spokesman on Defence in the United Kingdom (UK) and his accompanying delegation.



COSSAF received in his office on 13 May 2015, **Lt. Gen. Thomas Beckett**, Defence Senior Advisor for Middle East at the Ministry of Defence in the United Kingdom (UK).



The Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) celebrated the reception of 'Shinas', the second vessel of Ufuq project which includes the building of four ships for RNO coastal patrols. The reception ceremony for the vessel at Said Bin Sultan Marine Base was sponsored by **COSSAF**, who toured the vessel accompanied by senior officers and invitees. The ceremony was attended by **Air Vice-Marshal Mattar bin Ali al Obaidani**, Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman and **Rear Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis al Raisi**, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman.



COSSAF received in his office at Muaskar al Murtafa on 8 January 2016, **Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford**, Chief of the Air Staff of the United Kingdom. The meeting exchanged viewpoints and reviewed the march of military cooperation, which serves armed forces in the two friendly countries.



On behalf of **COSSAF**, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) **Maj Gen Matar bin Salim al Balushi** met on 10 June 2015 a delegation from the UK Defence Academy led by **Major General Julian Fry**, commandant of the joint services command and staff college. Talks during the meeting focused on issues of common concern and ways to further strengthen them.



COSSAF received in his office at Muaskar al Murtafa on 8 July 2015, **Lt Gen James Everard**, Commander of the British Land Forces and his accompanying delegation.



COSSAF visited on 26 June 2015 the SAF team, which was taking part in the Military Championship at Bisley, the United Kingdom.

SAF SHOOTING TEAM ACHIEVES GLORY AT BISLEY



The Sultan's Armed Forces' (SAF) shooting team has earned The Sultanate a huge achievement at the Military Shooting Championship held at Bisley's ranges, in the United Kingdom during June 18-30. In all, the SAF shooting team won 24 trophies and a number of medals, the most important of which was His Majesty's Cup which is for the shooter with the highest score in the National Rifle Association of the UK (NRA).



COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

*The Command and Staff College (CSC) of The Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) celebrated on 13 July 2015 the graduation of the 28th batch under the auspices of **HE Mohammed bin Nassir Al Rasbi**, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defence who handed over the graduation and appreciation certificates to graduates.*

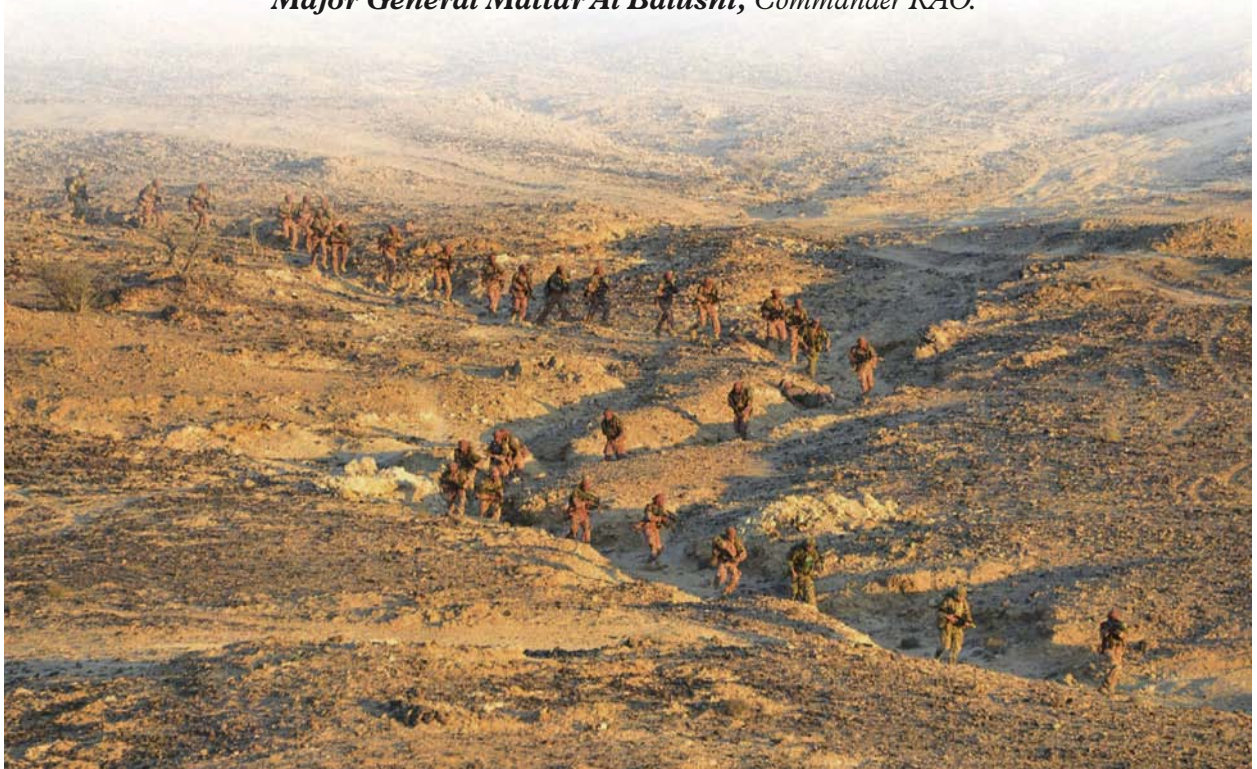




ROYAL ARMY OF OMAN



*On 23 March 2015, RAO Oman Recce Regt, with the support from some units of 11 Inf Bde, and with the participation of some supporting units from the UK forces, conducted EX Mountain Storm under the auspices of **Major General Mattar Al Balushi**, Commander RAO.*



On 24 February 2015 The Royal Army of Oman carried out the practical demonstration of the joint tactical exercise (WADI AN NAR) by 11 Inf Bde and with the support of Oman Recce Regt. The exercise was held under the patronage of commander RAO and was attended by *Major General Dana Petard*, the deputy commanding officer of ARGENTCOM.



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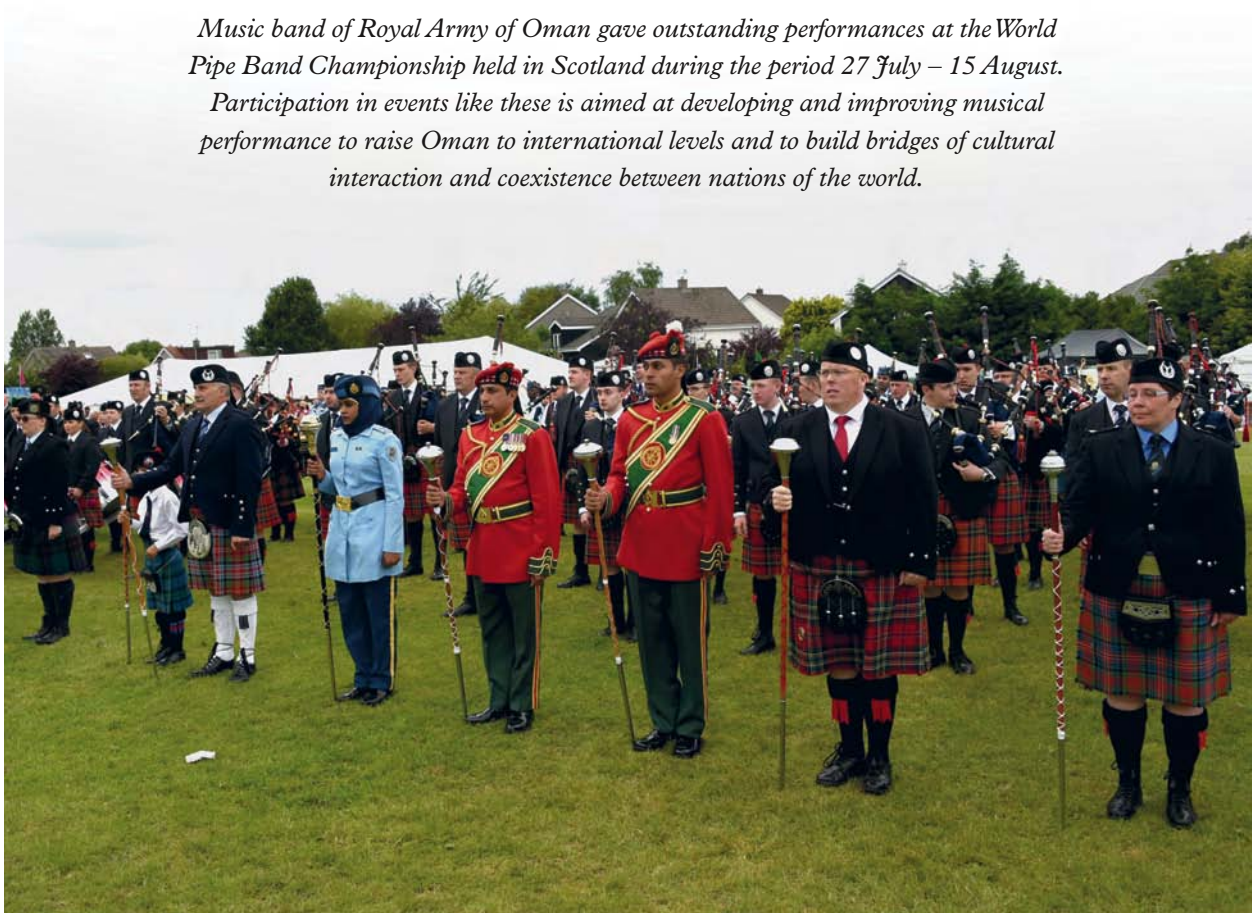
Paul Lambert, Infantry
Headquarters, 100th
Battalion, injured in
Afghanistan in 2004

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The Royal Army of Oman (RAO) Music Band stages a number of performances at the end of its participation at Tattoo Basel Military Music Festival, which was held in Basel in Switzerland. It is worth mentioning that RAO Music band staged a number of music performances at Tattoo Music Festival, which was held in Basel in Switzerland during the period from 13-25 July.



Music band of Royal Army of Oman gave outstanding performances at the World Pipe Band Championship held in Scotland during the period 27 July – 15 August. Participation in events like these is aimed at developing and improving musical performance to raise Oman to international levels and to build bridges of cultural interaction and coexistence between nations of the world.



ROYAL NAVY OF OMAN

On 31 March 2015, The Royal Navy of Oman received the vessel 'Al Seeb' and named the second vessel 'Shinas'.



The ceremony was held under the auspices of **Rear Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis al Raisi**, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman who said that 'Al Seeb' is the first ship of Al Ufoq Project which includes providing RNO with four coast guard patrol ships that are equipped with modern equipment and defence systems to carry out their marine missions efficiently.



The Royal Navy of Oman band participation 24 May 2015 in the Military Music Festival (Tattoo) in Saint-Quentin in France. The RNO band and other bands marched across the city of Saint-Quentin amid cheerful response by the residents who crowded on both sides of the street rejoicing over the event. The RNO band played from Omani folklore and some Arab and western music tracks.



The Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) conducted the annual naval drill "Asad Al Bahr 2 – 2015" in the Batinah Naval Area during the period 11-15 October 2015, with the assistance of the Royal Air Force of Oman.



RNO conducted the joint Naval Exercise "Khanjar Hadd" during 10-14 May 2015 in the Sea of Oman. RNO warships and several vessels from friendly navies participated in this exercise with the support of RAFO.



In the modernising and developing efforts adopted by SAF, RNO held a celebration on 22 December 2015 marking the decommissioning of RNO vessels (*Sharqia* and *Sadah*). The celebration was held in Saeed bin Sultan Naval Base under the patronage of Commander RNO, **Rear Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis al Raisi**.



Rear Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis al Raisi, Commander RNO, received **Richard Paniguan**, Head the UK Defence and Security Organisation (DSO) and **Air Vice-Marshal Nigel Maddox**, Senior Military Adviser at the UK Trade.

In the modernising and developing efforts adopted by SAF, RNO held a celebration on 24 March 2015 marking the decommissioning of RNO vessels (*Shabab Oman* and *Seeb*). The celebration was held in Saeed bin Sultan Naval Base under the patronage of Commander RNO, **Rear Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis al Raisi**, who delivered a speech in which he praised the service of the two vessels and their crews for more than three decades.



*In fulfilment of the royal directives of **His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said**, Royal Navy of Oman vessel, **Shabab Oman II**, left for GCC countries on its first journey (Cooperation Sail 2015).*





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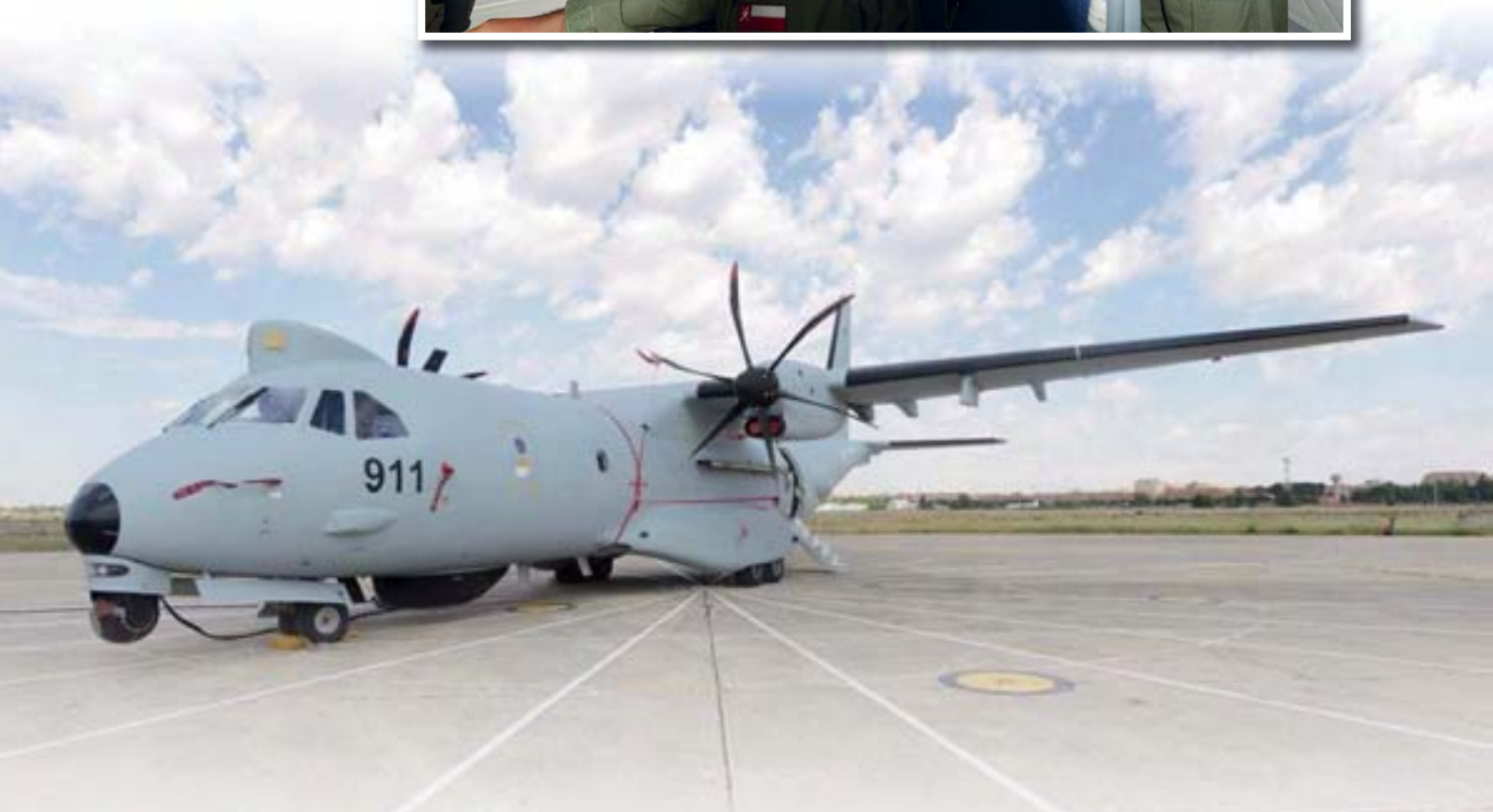
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ROYAL AIR FORCE OF OMAN



***HE Sayyid Bader bin Saud Harib Al Busaidi**, Minister Responsible
for Defence Affairs, presided over the launch of the maritime surveillance
aircraft CASA C-295 at Getafe Air Base in Madrid, Spain.*

ROYAL AIR FORCE OF OMAN



Air Vice Marshal Matar bin Ali Al Obaidani, Commander of the Royal Air Force of Oman, received **Richard Paniguan**, Head of the UK Defence and Security Organisation (DSO) and **Air Vice-Marshal Nigel Maddox**, Senior Military Adviser at the UK Trade and Investment Organisation of Defence and Security.



Air Vice Marshal Matar bin Ali Al Obaidani received in his office at Muaskar al Murtafa on 8 January 2015, **Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford**, Chief of the Air Staff of the United Kingdom. The two sides exchanged views and discussed several matters of common concern.



The Royal Air Force of Oman celebrated on 21 January 2016 the graduation of pilots, air officer cadets and limited service officers in a ceremony held at the military parade field at Ghala Base and the Sultan Qaboos Air Academy under the patronage of **HE Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi**, the Minister of the Diwan of the Royal Court. ■

"After I lost my leg in an IED explosion in Afghanistan, the RAF Benevolent Fund helped me to get my independence back."

FORMER SAC MICHAEL GOODY

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THE NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE (NDC)



electronic networks. This is in order to create a renewed academic environment that fosters creativity and development. It also contributes to the achievement of the NDC's vision and mission in the preparation of national leadership cadres.

The first National Defence Course started on September 1, 2013 followed by the official opening of the College on December 11, 2013, under the auspices of **His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tareq Al Said**, Adviser to H.M. The Sultan under His Majesty's guidance.

Introduction

The National Defence College (NDC) was established in accordance with Royal Decree 2/2013 on January 8, 2013 as a response to the current and future requirements, and in order to achieve higher national interests. In fact, it reflects the belief of His Majesty, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, of the importance of developing Omanis on different levels.

The NDC is the most important national academic institution in the field of strategic studies. It is a specialised scientific and research institution and an important pillar that introduces new strategic ideas into the concept of comprehensive national activities within an integrated strategic system. It serves defence policies and reinforces the components of Omani national security.

The College contains facilities and modern equipment, which were designed according to the latest standards based on the best educational and training systems and multi-purpose



Curriculum of the National Defence Course

Participants in the National Defence Course undergo an integrated learning programme that lasts for one academic year. It starts the first week of September and ends the last week of July. The curriculum of the course was designed according to the highest academic levels and benefits from experiences of other countries. Taking into account Omani reality, and meeting the requirements of national security, it also reflects the culture and character of the Omani society.

National security and defence constitute the basis of the course's curriculum. Academic subjects focus on strategic planning, the formulation of national policies and strategies, and national security. In addition, the College focuses on international relations, the analysis of the most important modern strategic issues and the study of their repercussions on global, regional and national security. It covers the strategic management of crises, strategic leadership and the planning of military campaigns.

Speakers from both the military and diplomatic fields contribute to the implementation of the programme. The members of the Strategic Directing Staff contribute, thanks to their practical expertise, and a wide scientific and academic knowledge, to the intellectual process from which participants benefit.

The NDC is academically affiliated to Sultan Qaboos University (SQU). This supports the MA's Degree Programme in Strategic Studies in the fields of security and defence.

The College hosts their Excellencies, Ministers and prominent leaders to give lectures on the strategies of their Ministries and departments. It also seeks to attract academics from prestigious universities and international study centres, in addition to experts specialising in strategic studies and national security.



Learning Philosophy

In order to achieve the vision, mission and objectives of the College, the learning philosophy focuses on the student. This is based on an interactive learning environment in which the students give their creative ideas, deep strategic analysis and objective evaluation.

The curriculum of the course includes discussions and workshops, which students run and manage. These relate to security, defence and the development of national policies and strategies. The NDC seeks, through discussions and workshops, to widen the students' intellectual and personal confidence in order to participate efficiently to the formulation and development of national policies and strategies.





Field Studies

Field Studies are considered one of the most important pillars of the course's curriculum.

They have three main dimensions. The first is the national dimension. Visits are made to the most important strategic vital locations and facilities, in order to learn more about their importance and to study aspects related to national security. The second is the regional dimension. It focuses on field visits to some neighbouring countries to study matters relating to regional security. The third is the international dimension. Visits are made to important countries at an international level to discuss strategic issues.



Strategic Exercise

The strategic exercise "Decision-Making", which is run in the last weeks towards the end of the course, is considered a culmination of the course. It aims to develop decision-making skills at the strategic level. The exercise was formulated in cooperation with Systems Consultants Services Limited (SCS), a British company with wide expertise in the formulation and design of exercises related to security and defence.



Scientific Research

Scientific matters and developments have an important bearing on defence issues. Students are encouraged to relate to these aspects when considering their impact on defence and security matters.

Students also prepare and write a report, which is a summary of the issues that have been studied in discussions and workshops during the course. They summarise these in a comprehensive study.

Conclusion

The NDC has succeeded, in a very short amount of time and through the experience of the three past courses, in laying strong foundations that enable it to constitute an intellectual beacon, and an important academic institution that contributes to the development of a generation of leaders and senior officials who will serve the present and future of Oman. ■



SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES GOLF MATCH 2015

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY MATCH

*Tuesday 16 June 2015 at
Dorset Golf and Country Club – Near Wareham, Dorset*

We were blessed with another brilliant day. The weather was glorious – dry, some sunshine, but with a nice cooling breeze so it wasn't too uncomfortable. The occasion was truly celebrated with an excellent lunch featuring a very nice fish starter followed by a delicious lamb shank and finished with summer fruits pudding. The Staff were excellent as always, smartly turned out and very attentive.

This fixture is for those who have served in a military or civilian capacity in or have a strong affection for The Sultanate of Oman or adjacent countries in The Middle East and private guests with a military/police background. Ladies are most welcome to attend either as players or for the lunch only. This year we had 29 players with four extra for lunch and we were pleased to see four Lady players. This was a very good turn out and everyone had an excellent time as one can ascertain from the several 'thank yous' received.

Players ventured out from 09:40 in nine groups of three or four players. The match was followed by lunch where **Captain John de Winton** Royal Navy (Ex Chief of Staff for The Sultan of Oman's Navy) kindly presented the prizes.

It was nice to see some new faces attending our gathering for the first time. They were **Richard Seymour** (Royal Navy), **David Brocklebank** (Royal Navy), **Tim Stringer** (Guest), **David Beardsley** (Guest), **Rob Brigen** (Guest) It would be nice to make it 30 competitors next year and please bring wife, girlfriend, partner for lunch and perhaps to drive home.

We had some very good scores and the winner was **Alec Armitage** (British Army) on 36 points. Second was **Robin Snaith** (Military Insurance Broker) on 34 points. Third was a group of four with 33 points **Nick Last** (Royal Navy), **Martin Waterhouse** (Royal Navy), **Richard Evans** (Royal Navy/SON), **Tim Hawkins** (British Army/SOLF). Longest drive was achieved by **Alec Armitage** (British Army) and the nearest the pin was Alec Armitage (British Army). So Alec had a really successful day. Well done! Next year I think it only fair to introduce a two point penalty for home club players and there will be a prize for the best score from a previous SAF employee. This year prizes went to Richard Evans and Tim Hawkins as the highest scoring SAF members. Richard Evans also won the Heads and Tails competition. The Ladies winner was **Marion Stanton** on 34 points who took home a lovely bottle of champagne.

The competitors were: Alec Armitage (British Army), David Beardsley (Guest), **Tom Bremridge** (British Army/SOLF), Rob Brigen (Guest), David Brocklebank (Royal Navy), **Honor Brown** (Guest), Richard Evans (SON Salalah/Royal Navy), **Neil Fawcett** (Royal Navy/SON), **Robin Gainsford** (Royal Navy/SON/Ministry of Environment), **John Gunning** (Commander SON), Tim Hawkins (British Army/SOLF), **Henry Hogger** (British Ambassador Syria/Basra), Nick Last (Royal Navy/Armillar Patrol), **Anne Quarrie**

(Guest), **David Sandifer** (Royal Navy), **Patrick Sheahan** (British Army/Iran), Robin Snaith (Military Insurance Broker), **Philip Sevier-Summers** (British Army/SOLF), Richard Seymour (Royal Navy), **Frank Stanton** (Royal Navy/SON), Marion Stanton (lived in Oman), **Sammy Stubbs** (Royal Navy), Tim Stringer (Guest), **Richard Tregarthen** (British Army/SOLF), **Martin Waterhouse** (Royal Navy/Submariner), **Jenny Waterhouse** (Wife of Martin Waterhouse), **Ralph Wykes-Sneyd** (Royal Navy), **Mark Whitley** (Royal Navy/Gulf LCTs) and John De Winton (SON/Royal Navy).

Everyone had a very enjoyable day with glorious weather and the course was in an immaculate condition but there is plenty of room for others to join us. Let's try to make the next occasion up to 30 competitors especially with more Lady players and guests for lunch on 13 June 2016. There will be plenty of prizes. The cost will be £47.00. It would be particularly nice to see some of the old faces who have played before returning and challenging the winner. Please encourage all your eligible friends to join in. Ladies are also most welcome to join us for lunch. Please e-mail me robingainsford@hotmail.com, if you have not already done so, to show interest and I will put you on my e-mail list. If you would like to stay at the club hotel, we can offer Bed & Breakfast for £40.00 (tbc) per person and you could have another round the next day at 50 per cent green fees. ■

Robin Gainsford – 01929 471419 – robingainsford@hotmail.com

BOOK REVIEW

A HISTORY OF MODERN OMAN

By Jeremy Jones and Nicholas Ridout
Published by the Cambridge University Press
ISBN: 978-1-107-00940-0 Hardback. ISBN: 978-1-107-40202-7 Paperback.

Jeremy Jones has an Oxford based consulting business and has worked on Oman since the 1980s. **Nicholas Ridout** has worked with Jeremy on research in Oman since 1989.

This book describes a deep understanding of Oman's history covering politics, culture and religion to mention just a few of its contents from the eighteenth century to the present. Its later chapters give the authors' impressions of the challenges facing the country in these turbulent times in the region.

It is an excellent read for Association members who are interested in the story of Oman and the considerable achievements of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos since 1970.

NBK

BRITISH LOAN SERVICE OMAN

by Jaimie Beckett

There is much talk these days about 'Defence Engagement' and the role it plays in our national security strategy. There are few places where this sort of engagement is as deep and mutually beneficial as in Oman, where a team of 100 or so British Loan Service Personnel, the legacy of our historic blood ties, continues to assist The Sultan's Armed Forces across all three Services.



The last 12 months have been as fruitful as ever for the 42 Army Advisors, with some really good combined activity with a UK Company Group in Rubkhut for six weeks and one of our Company Groups in UK for four weeks.

For the past few years, a light-role infantry company group has been embedded in a British battle group during Exercise WESSEX STORM, which takes place on Salisbury Plain in UK. This is the army's most demanding sub-unit deployment and, supported by instructors from the UK, we spend months preparing the company for their forthcoming challenge. These battle group exercises, held using the laser based Tactical Engagement System (TES) are hard enough for well-drilled British sub-units, but add the additional friction of the language barrier, unfamiliar weapons and radios, and the biting cold of Salisbury Plain in late November, and you can appreciate just how much of a challenge it is for our men from the baking interior of Oman. Nevertheless, the improvement in our soldiers operational effectiveness is so marked that it has convinced the Army Commander to set up his own version of the UK's Field Training Unit to deliver TES exercises here in Oman. Fighting against a live opposing force that is shooting back with lasers has the potential to totally transform the way the Army operates over the next few years.

Royal Army of Oman entered the Exercise Cambrian Patrol for the second time having won a coveted Bronze medal in 2014. Billed as the 'ultimate challenge', Cambrian Patrol requires section-strength teams to soldiering skills. With support from their Loan Service advisors and a small team from 3rd Battalion, The Rifles, the Omani squad was whittled down during months of arduous training, making good use of the severe terrain on Jebel Akhdar and the khareef-shrouded mountains in Dhofar. But some warm Dhofar drizzle was never going to replicate proper British rain, so the team finished their training with a few weeks in the Pentlands in

Scotland. The final eight-man team was deployed to Wales, crossing the Line of Departure in the most appalling weather! As teams from British infantry regiments and commando units succumbed to the relentless wind and rain, **Lt Mohammad Al Sunaidi's** patrol dug deep, soldiered on, and was awarded a Silver Medal for its achievements. This is a major accomplishment. Many teams enter

year after year and fail to be awarded a medal. To do so in the week when 50 per cent of the teams withdrew due to the weather is a testament to the team's skill, fitness, dedication and absolute coherence in adversity. It is a performance that Oman is rightly proud of, and gives us something to aim for and improve on next year.

This is a challenging period in the Royal Air Force of Oman's (RAFO) history as they introduce ever more sophisticated technology and modify the manpower training required to meet the associated challenges. To assist them, the Royal Air Force currently provides 21 Loan Service (LS) officers and NCOs to the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) in a wide variety of posts across all capability areas. All of the RAF LS personnel fill executive appointments within the RAFO organisation with the only exception being the Senior British Loan Service Officer (RAF) who provides military advice directly to Commander RAFO as well as supporting all Directorates.

Within the Directorate of Engineering LS personnel are informing policy, developing governance and providing quality assurance within HQ RAFO as well as providing six staff at the Air Force Technical College in key appointments. Within the Directorate of Standards the RAF LS Deputy Director is responsible for flying standardisation across all RAFO flying units enhancing operational



effectiveness and improving safety. He has the assistance of the seven LS pilots who fly on front-line and training squadrons in most of the RAFO aircraft fleets. Other LS personnel are doing an outstanding job embedded within RAFO HQ, the Supply Depot and at the Sultan Qaboos Air Academy. Finally, within the Directorate of Projects, SO1 Maritime Security is playing an integral role in the Concepts and Doctrine, Equipment and Training lines of development for the CASA 295 Maritime Surveillance Aircraft. As the project approaches declaration of Full Operational Capability, this essential post will transfer to RAFO Standards.



The Royal Navy of Oman is seeing a period of exciting growth, mainly with last year's arrival of the remaining two (of three) large British built Khareef Class corvettes, but also with the introduction of a new, significantly bigger sail training ship (SHABAB OMAN II)

and four more capable Patrol Vessels later this year too. You can imagine the challenges that these bring, across manpower, training, support and infrastructure areas, as well as to ensure that these capabilities are fully exploited. I am pleased to advise that the RNO Commander continues to see Loan Service as highly relevant, indeed he has asked for a significant uplift in areas that will assist him in introducing the new ships and sustain them for the future. It is not just front-line hardware that expands though, as the Commander is Chairman of the National Maritime Security Committee and, in this regard, he is working with other Service Commanders to introduce a new Joint Headquarters and Maritime Security Centre. Advances have been made in Joint Interoperability, especially in maritime aviation and SF, but I see this Joint HQ / MSC and the next Exercise SAIF SAREEA in 2018 being key enablers in bringing SAF even closer together. ■



BOOK REVIEW

HIGH COMMAND BRITISH MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN THE IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN WARS

By Christopher L. Elliott
Published by C. Hurst & Co. Ltd. 2015. 295pp. £25

You may well ask why is a book about the higher direction of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan reviewed in the SAF Journal? Three reasons: first because the Dhofar War is still studied as a model campaign, not that we necessarily recognised it as such at the time; secondly because one of 'us' rose to become Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), and is extensively quoted; thirdly because one day there will (or certainly should) be an Omani student on the Higher Command and Staff Course at the British Defence Academy at Shrivenham.

As soon as I opened the book (not so light holiday reading) I twigged that the author was slanting his appreciation towards the lucrative defence studies and academic markets. And so it has proved. It is required reading now for military students, but, to be frank, neither for that captive audience nor a political readership let alone the wider public does it cut the mustard.

A former SAF loan service officer for whom I have the highest regard, and who himself has written cogently on 'our' campaign, is a touch dismissive of the author, retired **Major General Christopher Elliott**, a fellow Sapper (any more clues needed?).

Even more damningly a former CDS (I couldn't possibly say which one) suggests that the author 'has made a book out of a chapter'.

Whilst both these views are valid, High Command does rattle along and gives some food for thought. Such hindsight fare is not altogether digestible and is somewhat judgmental. At one point I pencilled in the margin 'smug show-boating'. Many of the conclusions would have had added weight, and probably been refined, if the author had waited for the publication of the Chilcott report. But, and I digress, the appalling delay in the report is emphatically not an indictment of **Sir John**. He is as distinguished and clear-sighted a civil servant as they come. What is more I am in little doubt, indeed no doubt, that 'our' CDS, the longest serving one to date, will emerge from the report with his credentials yet more polished. Page 199 '**Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup** was the most intellectually capable chief for a decade... he had developed a considerable understanding of counter-insurgency operations, both from conscientious study and from his operational experience (flying *Strikemasters*) during the insurgency war in Oman in 1974, which he described as very formative... more than once (as CDS) he would be the steadying influence when nasty events on the battlefield wobbled political heads'.

I am sorry to write so scathingly of High Command. I have never met the author and have no axe to grind. The book does merit a broad readership, as long as one can take the numerous factual errors and can keep asking that staff college question: So what?

Patrick Shervington
SAF 1974-75


40 YEARS AGO

by Ian Buttenshaw

This article covers the final stages of the Dhofar conflict from January leading to the Final Victory in December 1975, and briefly covers the final rebel activities after the cease fire.

Chronology

1975 Feb 21	Operation Himaar is launched to engage the enemy's 9th of June Regiment in the Wadi Ashwaq and is followed up by operations in the centre and east.
1975 Mar	Jordanian 9th Special Forces Battalion relieve SAF troops guarding the Midway Road.
1975 Aug 13	Operations Waggid Badri and Badri are mounted as the opening diversionary moves of the Final Push in the West.
1975 Sep 11	Jordanian Special Forces Battalion hands back Midway Road to SAF and returns to Jordan.
1975 Oct 15	The first of the main two diversionary moves (Op Khahoof) in preparation for Operation Hadaf, the main thrust of the final push, the move down the escarpment from Sarfait, is so successful that the entire plan for the final push is revised.
1975 Oct 17	Operation Said the second diversion prior to Operation Hadaf, is launched by the Iranians, north of Rakhuyt.
1975 Oct 17	Artillery and Air engage the PDRY position around Hawf in retaliation to their firing on Omani territory.
1975 Oct 22 – Nov 18	Operation Hadaf by FF succeeds in clearing the treeline north of the Wadi Sayq and capturing Shirishitti Caves.
1975 Nov 28	Operation Hilwa to capture Dalkhuyt and clear the Darra Ridge begins.
1975 Dec 1	Dalkhuyt captured by FF.
1975 Dec 2	The FF Troops clearing the Darra Ridge, meet up with elements of MR advancing from Sarfait, marking the end of organized resistance in Dhofar.
1975 Dec 11	HM Sultan Qaboos declares in Muscat that the war is officially over.
1976 March 10	Oman announces a cease fire along the border with PDRY.
1976 Apr- Sep	Several contacts are made with scattered enemy in the Eastern Area.

- 
- 1976 April 30 The Front fires its weapons across the border for the last time.
- 1976 Sep – Dec Major operations are mounted in the East to round up the 50 or so remaining enemy.
- 1976 Sep BATT withdraw from Oman.
- 1977 May 1 Last Squadron of Jordanian Engineers leave Oman.
- 1978 June 2 Enemy kill 5 civilian employees of Airwork Services at Khawr Rawri.
- 1978 June 7 SOA convoy ambushed on Salalah – Thumrait Road
- 1979 May 9 Operation in Jebel Area results in contact with four enemy. Three enemy killed and the fourth kills the SAF Company Commander.
- 1979 May 8 A Southern Regiment (KJ) soldier killed in a contact with an enemy group.
- 1979 Oct 21 Another KJ soldier killed by enemy group in Wadi Darbat Area.
- 1980 Mar 28 The final contact of the war, a KJ ambush kills one enemy and probably wounds a second

OPERATION HIMAAR

Despite the capture of Rakhyut, the heavy casualties taken during Operation Dharab had lowered SAF morale and a boost was necessary; this was provided by Operation Himaar.

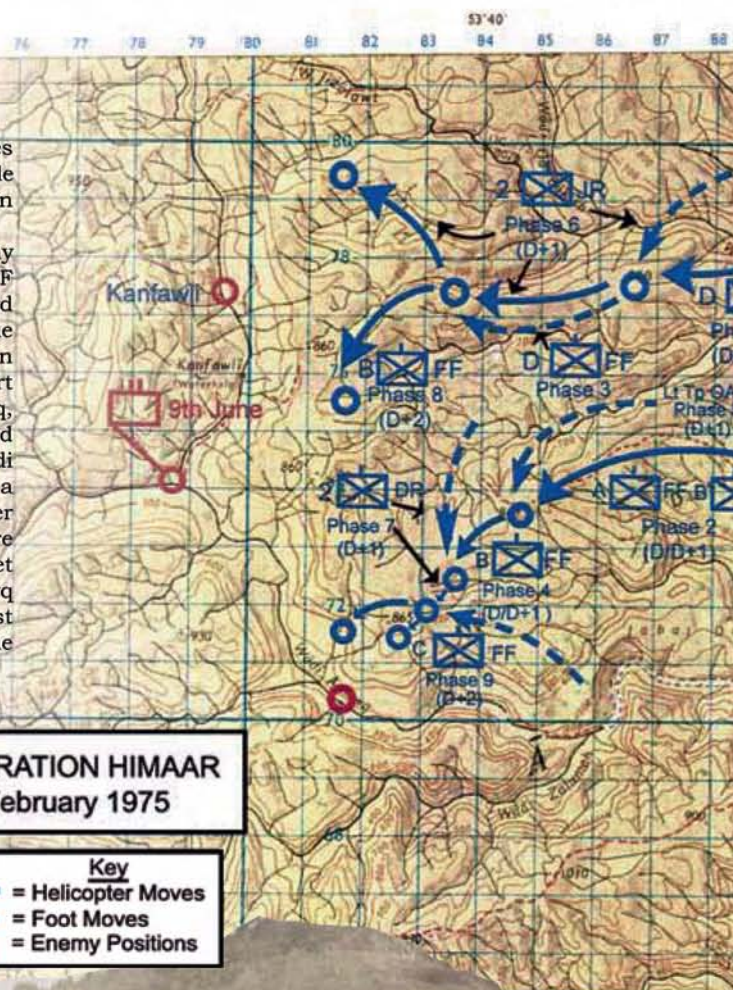
Operation Himaar began on 21 February. A seven-company force was assembled under the command of CO FF comprising all of FF and a company each from DR, JR and KJ. The operation was against the enemy 9th of June Regiment positions based on the Kanfawli, Alabak, Bisreen and Lahazeer waterholes in the Wadi Ashawq. The first part of the operation secured the heights above the Wadi Ashawq, by a well thought-out series of concurrent ground and helicopter moves. The troops then descended into the wadi and attacked the enemy positions there. The operation was a complete success, several enemy were killed and a number wounded, and very large amounts of ammunition were captured, including one complete 122mm Katyushka rocket launcher. As a result of this major SAF success Wadi Ashawq remained free of any permanent enemy presence for the rest of the war and there were no further incomers onto the Hornbeam Line.

FF soldier with 122mm Katyushka Rocket Launcher and other weapons captured during Operation Himaar



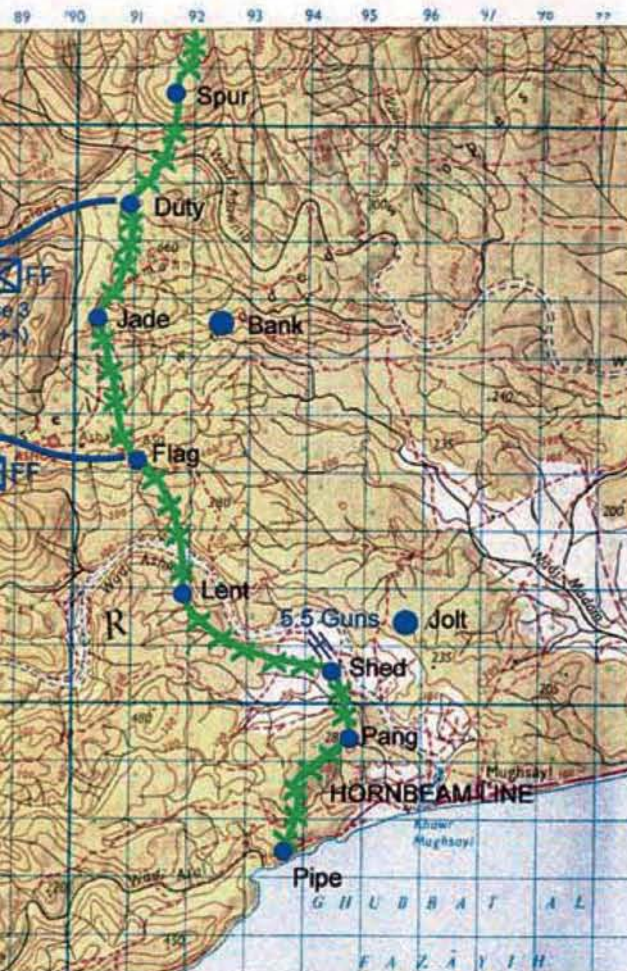
OPERATION HIMAAR February 1975

Key
 = Helicopter Moves
 = Foot Moves
 = Enemy Positions



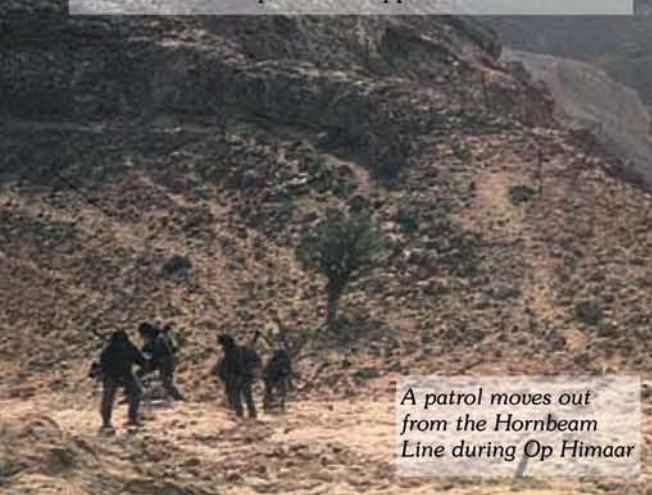
Oman Artillery Light Troop in action in support of operations





Jordanian Forces Arrive

In late February the 91st Special Forces Battalion of the Royal Jordanian Armed Forces arrived to assist SAF and took over the responsibility for the security of the Midway Road. This freed JR for offensive operations in the Central Area, which the Jordanians also provided support for.



A patrol moves out from the Hornbeam Line during Op Himaar

FF/OPS/1

See Distribution

17 Feb 75

OPS 3/75 - OP HIMAAR (DONKEY)

References:

- Map DHCFAIR Series K 668 Sheet NE 39-163 Edition 3 GSGS.
- Map SALALAH, West OMAN 1:150,000 GSGS 5231 Sheet 3 Edition 1-GSGS (used throughout this Op O when possible).
- Op HIMAAR - Air Safety Map (at Annex A).
- Op HIMAAR Special Map (to be issued separately) which is a photographic reproduction of Reference B with an extension West of the 81 Easting from Reference A.

TIME ZONE USED THROUGHOUT THE ORDER - DELTA.

1. SITUATION

a. En Forces

- 9th June Regt is known to have used caves in KANFAWLI GR 7977 (not as shown in Reference A), BISREEN GR 8170 and HAZEER GR 8170 as stores and may have its HQ in this area.
- 9th June Regt strength is not known; its HQ was last ident at AL ALABAK GR 7874.
- En is thought to use the fol tracks to reach the high ground East of WADI ASHAWQ:
 - GR 7980 (marked on Reference A).
 - GR 8075 (marked on Reference A).
 - GR 8170.
 - Possibly another in the general area of ZALUHAH GR 8671.

b. Friendly Forces. Ops NADEN AND HORNBEAM continue.

c. Atts and Dets

(1) Under Comd

- 2 Coy DR.
 - 2 Coy JR.
 - FQ FAN.
 - Small det FQ FOK.
- (2) In DS. C Bty 1 Regt OA.
- (3) In Sp
- 1 Sqn (Strike) SOAF.
 - 3 Sqn SCAF.

CSAF	P/H
GSO 1	L/H
GSO 2	
GSO 3	A/N

d. Met. At Annex D.

2. MISSION. To dominate the en posns in the Wadi ASHAWQ GR 8370.

3. EXECUTION

a. Gen Outline

- Seizing Objectives.** FF Gp with 6 rifle coys and Lt Tp C Bty 1 Regt OA will move West from Op HORNBEAM locs to seize the high ground overlooking KANFAWLI GR 7977, BISREEN GR 8170 and HAZEER GR 8170 by D+2.
- Searching.** After the high ground has been seized and the en posns in the Wadi ASHAWQ have been dominated, obsn of the en will start and the search for en wpns and eqpt will start and continue until about D+6.

(3) Phases

- Phase 1 of this OpO deals with the revised mapping and comms arrangements for Op HORNBEAM during Op HIMAAR. (See Annex C.)
- Op HIMAAR will be conducted initially in 8 Phases (2-9). Thereafter further verbal or written orders will be issued depending on en reaction, int and locs ident during the op. These Phases will be:

(i) **Phase 2.** Seizing a firm base and gun posn at GR 8473 on ni D/D+1.

(ii) **Phase 3.** Temporary occupation of Pt 780 at GR 8677 during ni D/D+1.

(iii) **Phase 4.** Seizing Pt 870 at GR 8372 ni D/D+1.

(iv) **Phase 5.** Mov of Lt Tp C Bty to the firm base at GR 8473 on D+1.

(v) **Phase 6.** Seizing Pt 915 at GR 8179 on D+1.

(vi) **Phase 7.** Seizing South West end of Pt 870 at GR 8372 on D+1.

(vii) **Phase 8.** Seizing Pt 860 at GR 8175 on D+2.

(viii) **Phase 9.** Seizing the high ground at GRs 8172 and 8173 on D+2.

Extract from
the orders for
Operation
Himaar

Pre-Monsoon Operations

The difficulty for SAF Patrols all over the Dhofar was to achieve direct contact with the enemy. This definitely indicated the campaign was progressing in SAF's favour.

Above and left: OG manning positions along the border

The Setting for the Final Push



Monsoon Operations - 1975

SAF continued to operate extensively throughout the monsoon, ambushing waterholes, patrolling and mainly preparing for the post monsoon push. The lack of enemy activity during July allowed the post-monsoon operation, Operation Hadaf, to be formulated without distraction.

The Damavand Line

From January 1975 onwards and into the monsoon the Imperial Iranian Task Force (IITF) strengthened and patrolled the Damavand Line. By early July it was evident that the Damavand Line had reduced considerably the supplies getting through to the centre and the east.

Thus, the scene was set for the final push. It was decided to establish a third line, out of range of the Hawf Guns, from Dalkut to Furious, and then advance from there to the border to finally clear the enemy out of Oman.



The Damavand Line was constructed and manned by the IITF following the capture of Rakhyut in January 1975

THE FINAL PUSH – OPERATION HADAF

The Plan

As a result of the success of the Damavand and Hornbeam Lines in greatly reducing enemy supplies, and consequently activities, in the central and eastern areas, it was decided the way forward was to establish a third obstacle line, just out of range of the PDRY artillery, running north from Dalkut. Then clear the country up to this line before advancing towards the border.

D-Day was chosen as 21 October, a month after the monsoon and after Ramadhan and the Eid celebrations.

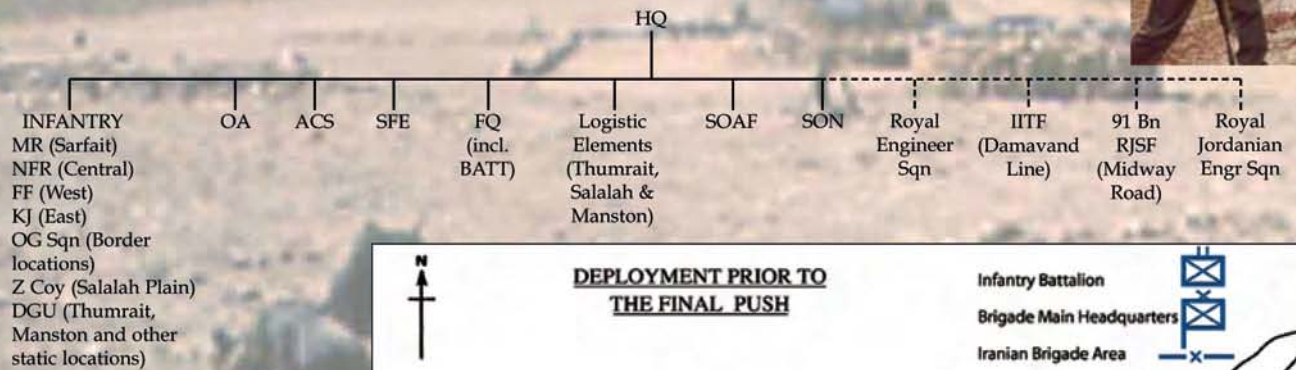
The post-monsoon plan in sequence envisaged:

- Between July and mid-October the driving of a road westward as far as Defa, with the intention of both a logistic build-up and deceiving the enemy into thinking that the objective was the Shirishitti area.
- On D minus six and four, diversions by Dhofar Brigade at Sarfait and the Iranian Brigade on the coast south of Shirishitti.
- On D-Day a land approach from Defa, initially west to Furious then swinging south to the high ground overlooking the formidable Wadi Sayq. On D plus one a helicopter assault across the wadi followed within two days by exploitation south to Dalkut.

These operations involved drastic thinning out in the centre and east but the prize was worth the risk. By the end of December it was considered SAF would have cleared between Damavand and the new line and would be well placed to advance towards the border, where it was thought they might arrive in strength by mid-1976.

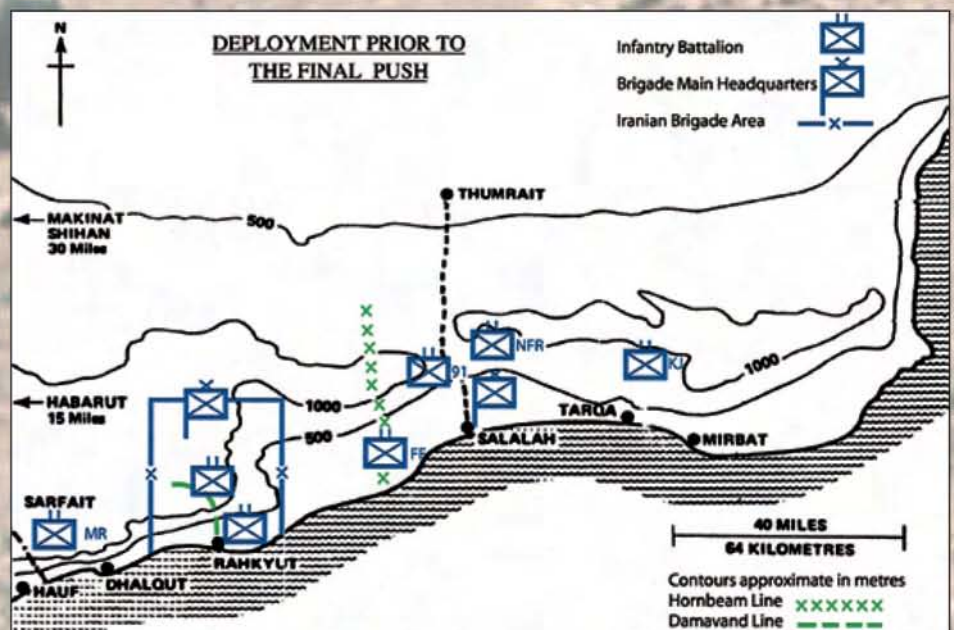


THE DHOFAR BRIGADE (Monsoon 1975)



Above: Sentry post at Jasmine 2

Background picture: Sarfait positions



His Majesty visits the Troops

Whilst the planning for the final push progressed, HM the Sultan continued to be out and about, visiting his troops and offering encouragement.



Clockwise from left: His Majesty visiting his troops; HM meeting the Firqat at Qairoon Hairitti; HM on a tour of FQ locations; HM and the Commander Dhofar Brigade having a meal with the Firqat; HM viewing troop positions; HM being shown around OG positions



Visit by King Hussein of Jordan

In April 1975, King Hussein, who had been supportive of Oman by providing training, guns and aircraft, as well as an Engineer Squadron in April 1974 and a Special Forces Battalion from February 1975, visited Oman to see his troops.



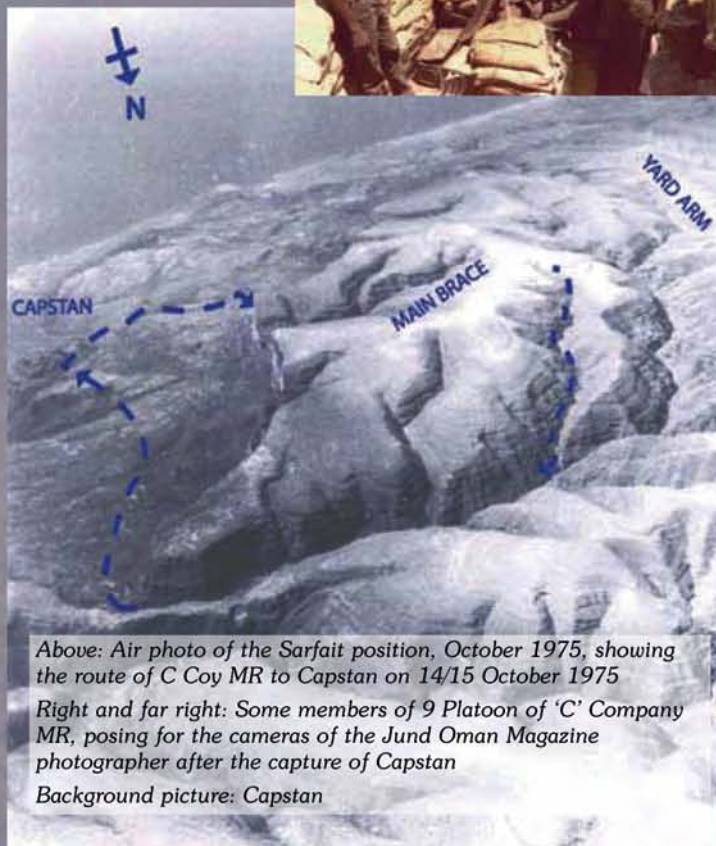
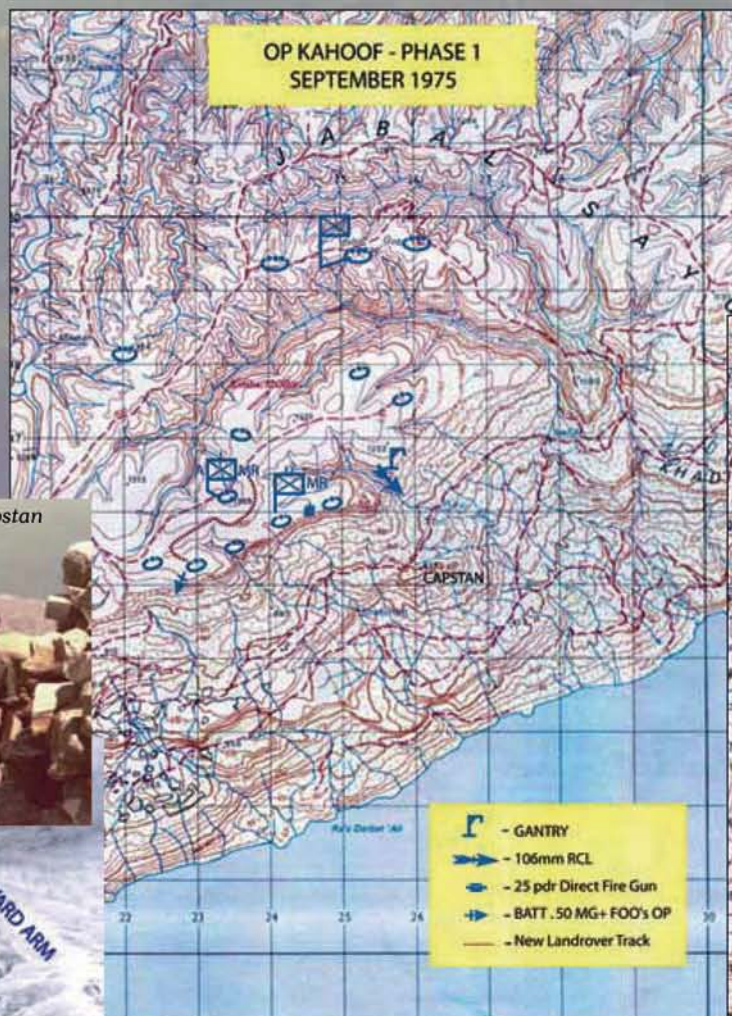
THE FINAL OPERATIONS – OPENING MOVES

Operation Badri

The initial diversion, Operation Wagid Badri, carried out by a company of MR to hold a threatening peak north of the Bait Handawb area, took place on 13-15 August but produced no enemy reaction. Op Badri was mounted on 15 August from the airhead at Manston, by a company of NFR, supported by a troop of ACS, BATT and the Firqats.

Its aim was to establish a patrol base at Gun Lines and later Defa, and create a corridor through which the Firqat could make contact with the local people in the west. Although disappointing in the sense that no SEPs or refugees came into the government positions, Op Badri proved to be a considerable success. It was, for example, directly responsible for provoking the enemy into using SAM 7 missiles inside Dhofar for the first time on 19 August. The PFLO thus showed its hand and lost the strategic surprise which this weapon might have given it during post-monsoon operations. Throughout September Op Badri caused the enemy to expend large quantities of heavy weapons' ammunition in vain and also to waste his resources by deploying a strong PLA observation screen north of the Wadi Sayq.

MR and SFE troops at Capstan



Above: Air photo of the Sarfait position, October 1975, showing the route of C Coy MR to Capstan on 14/15 October 1975

Right and far right: Some members of 9 Platoon of 'C' Company MR, posing for the cameras of the Jund Oman Magazine photographer after the capture of Capstan

Background picture: Capstan



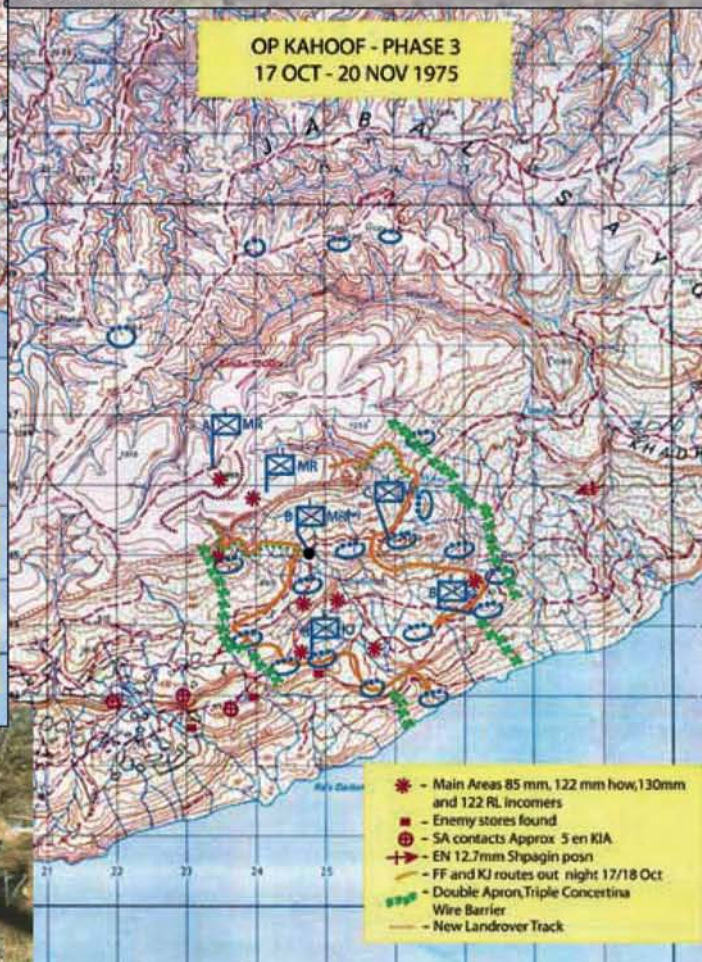
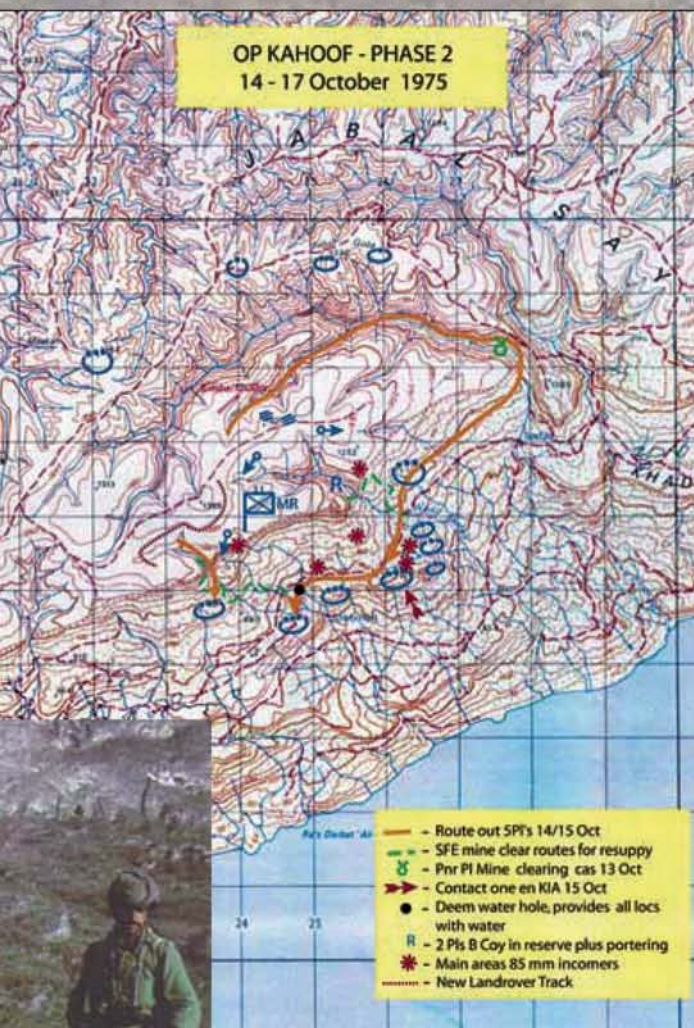
Operation Kahoof/Operation Hadaf

With the enemy's attention thus focused on Op Badri, SAF's major post-monsoon offensive began with a diversionary operation in the Sarfait area. On the night of 14 October, the Muscat Regiment achieved complete local surprise by breaching three enemy minefields around Sarfait and seizing the Capstan plateau without incurring any casualties. Although the plateau was originally intended to be held for only three days, it was decided in view of the slow enemy reaction on 15 October to reinforce success, amend the Op Hadaf plan and instead establish an obstacle line between Sarfait and the sea. To assist this operation two further companies (one each from FF and KJ) were flown to Sarfait under the command of MR and deployed below the escarpment on 16 and 17 October. The MR advance was ably supported by a Troop from the recently formed Sultan's Forces Engineers (SFE), who cleared the numerous mines ahead of MR and later erected a total of 4.5 Kilometres of wire obstacle between Sarfait and the sea.

By this time enemy artillery in the Hawf area had been making an increasingly determined effort to dislodge the MR from its new positions. Rather than allow such

shelling to interfere with the course of the successful operations by SAF, HM the Sultan ordered cross-border retaliation to be undertaken against selected military targets in the Hawf and Jaadhib area. This was carried out most effectively on 17 October by 1 Regt OA and 6 (Hunter) Sqn, SOAF. Renewed retaliation during the following weeks ensured that the PDRY was kept off balance and discouraged from initiating any further action to obstruct SAF.

SFE mine clearing party about to set off, and right; lifting mines below Sarfait



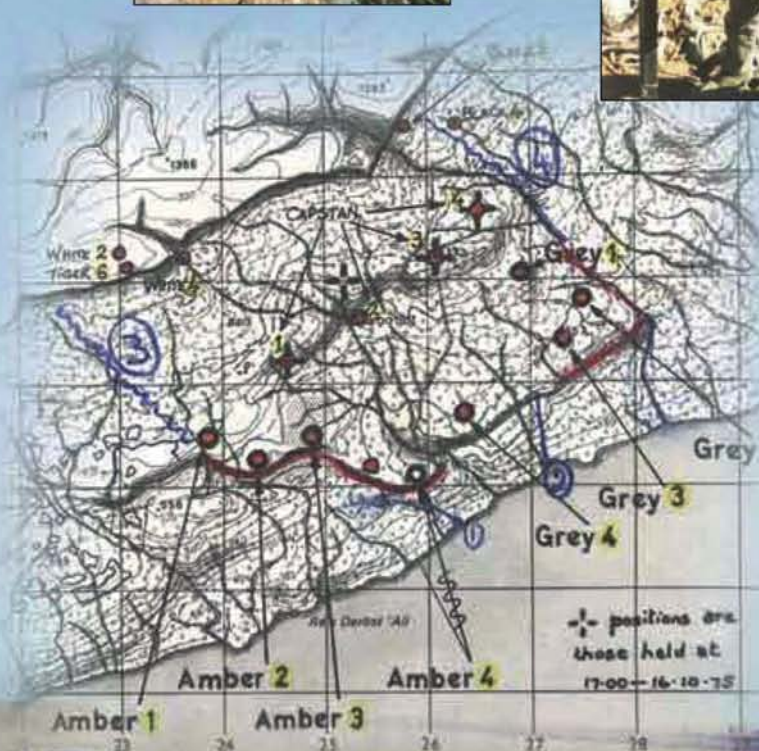
REINFORCING SUCCESS – THE FINAL PUSH



SFE constructing fence lines below Sarfait



Increasing the fire support at Sarfait: An Iranian helicopter flies in a 5.5 inch Gun



Firgat OP overlooking Capstan



Left: OC SFE's map, which was used during Operation Kahoof, showing intended future locations and fence lines, following the success of capturing Capstan

CONTINUES

Operation Sa'id

On 17 October, Iranian Forces began operations with the aim of occupying a new position on the Shiroz ridge to the west of the Damavand Line. After having done this by helicopter assault, they were then able to threaten the Shirishitti stores caves and draw off a number of enemy troops from other more important areas.

106mm RCL position overlooking Capstan



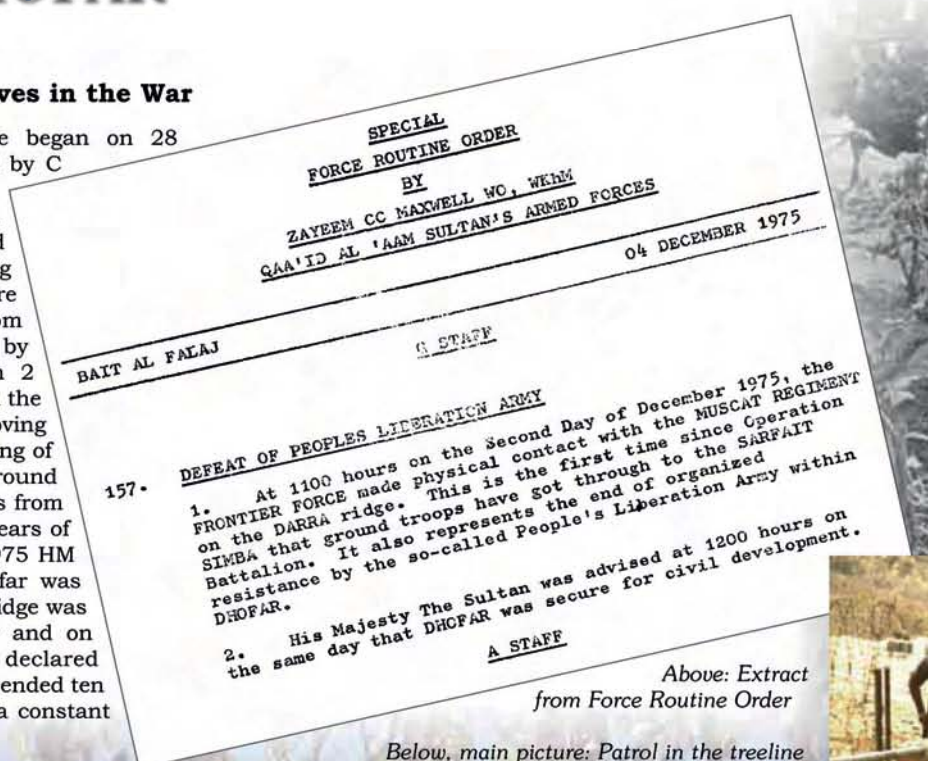
Operation Hadaf Revised

On 22 October, Frontier Force - which had been waiting in the wings at Defa - began to move south into the treeline to clear the enemy from the heights along the north of the Wadi Sayq. The PFLO in the Western Sector of Dhoofar had already fully appreciated that its windpipe was being throttled, its re-supply had ceased and that it was facing simultaneous activity by Government Forces on all sides. Confusion now swept through the enemy leadership and its plans for the defence of the Western Sector soon began to collapse. First, the PDRY authorities ordered the return of their troops fighting inside Dhoofar. Then the PFLO began to abandon important ground and fall back to the southern side of the Wadi Sayq. Finally, the Front withdrew all its remaining troops from the Western Sector of Dhoofar and led them back into the PDRY by a route passing north of Sarfait. Large finds of enemy equipment were made by the Frontier Force in the area of the Shirishitti caves, which they cleared before securing the area and handing it over to the Iranian Task Force on 18 November, thus bringing Op Hadaf to a successful conclusion. FF regrouped at Manston and Raysut ready to start the final clearance of the Darra Ridge. SAF ceased operations for one week to allow any remaining enemy to surrender before recommencing operations in the west.

VICTORY IN DHOFAR

Operation Hilwah and Closing Moves in the War

The operation to clear the Darra Ridge began on 28 November with an advance from Rakhyut by C Coy FF to seize the eastern end of the Darra Ridge. Once they had achieved this A and D Companies of FF were helicoptered ashore from the Iranian Logistical Landing Ship. Simultaneous to these moves MR were moving eastwards along the ridge from Sarfait. Dalkut was retaken on 1 December by D Coy FF and then at 1100 hours on 2 December, FF patrols moving westwards on the Darra Ridge met up with MR Troops moving eastwards - the first time since the mounting of Op Simba by DR in April 1972 that ground troops had physically linked up with troops from Sarfait. This was a fitting end to over 10 years of war and at 1200 hours on 2 December 1975 HM the Sultan was duly informed that "Dhofar was secure for civil development". The Darra Ridge was finally confirmed cleared on 8 December and on 11 December 1975 HM the Sultan declared internationally that the war was over. Thus ended ten years of SAF operations characterised by a constant sense of purpose, duty and comradeship.



Above: Extract from Force Routine Order

Below, main picture: Patrol in the treeline



The As Sumood Medal

The medal was struck in 1976 in commemoration of the end of organised resistance in Dhofar. The medal is best described in English as the 'Endurance Medal', but this is not truly descriptive without explanation so it is always

referred to as the As Sumood Medal. The original suggestion was that the medal should be a 'Victory Medal' but HM the Sultan ruled this out, and decided that it should recall the long war of endurance rather than victory.

The colours on the medal ribbon reflect those of the three services.

Qualifying service was thirty days during the period 23 May 1965 to 2 December 1975 inclusive.



FF Officer (left) meets up with MR Officer on the Darra Ridge at 1100 hours on 2 December 1972

Other Concurrent Operations

Although much of the glory rightly went to those units who operated in the west in late 1975 it is quite wrong for them to take it all. NFR and KJ held down the whole of the Central and Eastern sectors throughout, as well as providing one company each for the Sarfait operations. It was only the hard work and sound tactics of those who were operating in the central and eastern areas, that made it possible to concentrate adequate forces in the west.

Right: Road building on Operation Tenable

Below: Road building - FF Sentry guards SFE D8 bulldozer



Above: SFE establishing a water point at Deem, below the Sarfait escarpment, for use by all the troops there



EME repairing a truck in the UAG workshop

Logistics

None of the operational success could have been achieved without efficient logistic support. Everyone responsible for providing this demonstrated great flexibility in evolving and then operating a new supply system in order to meet the needs of the changed operational situation. The logistic system throughout the post-monsoon period was naturally characterised by a shift of emphasis to the west. The speed with which operations were proceeding there meant that the SAF Maintenance Area had to be moved closer to the units which it was supporting. Accordingly, the Support Group and Ordnance Services at Thumrait were transferred to Manston.

Thereafter many supplies were carried straight through to Manston by NALCO (Civilian) convoys from Northern Oman. The role played in the logistic system at this time by the SON vessel 'as-Sultana' is also noteworthy. Having arrived in Dhofar as a general cargo ship, she was transformed overnight into a floating airhead, from which over 1,000 helicopter lifts were flown into the Sarfait positions. The loads, mainly of combat supplies and defence stores, were prepared by a joint BTC/DGU handling party under the supervision of military engineers. Thus, despite all the difficulties encountered during this hectic period, SAF operations never faltered or slowed down for want of logistic support. Military and civil engineers were also busy throughout this time, both in direct support of operations and with the civil development of those areas already secured by SAF. For example, a major construction scheme began in early July 1975 following the decision to build a military road from Janook to Furious by the end of the year. This aim was greatly facilitated by the fact that a good road already existed from Heiron to Everest via Janook. A combined team of civilian and military operators soon swung into action, and by mid-December the road journey from Heiron to Furious could be made in about 75 minutes. In regard to solely military tasks, a troop of SFE enabled MR to descend from Sarfait onto the enemy's supply routes at the outset of post-monsoon operations by clearing many mines from the area. Later, its members erected a total of 4.5 Kilometres of wire obstacle between Sarfait and the sea. Elsewhere, other elements of the SFE, in support of FF, undertook the hazardous task of clearing enemy mines laid on the approaches to the Wadi Sayq and the Shirishitti stores caves. At the same time, the engineer contribution to the civil development programme remained impressive. Well-drilling continued throughout Dhofar, where there were some 50 new boreholes drilled by the end of 1975. Military engineers from SFE, MODER, the British Royal Engineers and the Royal Jordanian Engineers also carried out tasks at some 24 different locations. Such tasks included building schools, clinics, shops and water distribution projects. Roads were made to Kaftawt (Hammer 4) and Agadow (Diana 5) and the total network on the jebel extended to some 250 kilometres by the end of the war.

All operations during 1975 depended heavily on SOAF support. With an increasing number of aircraft of all types, a huge number of sorties were flown, often in the most trying conditions both in the air and on the ground. Dhofar Brigade by the end of the war was one of the most closely integrated Forces in history.



SFE Bulldozer at work

Left: Civil development

MOPPING UP

Remaining Resistance and Ceasefire with PDRY

Despite the success of operations in late 1975, which gave SAF effective control over all the territory of Dhofar, the war was not completely over. As 1976 began, isolated pockets of enemy remained in Jebel Dhofar, particularly in the east, and both the PFLO and PDRY posed potential threats to the Sultanate security. Cross border shelling was a serious problem before South Yemen accepted a cease-fire in March 1976.

The collapse of the west caused some exodus across the Damavand and Hornbeam Lines and a heightening of activity in the east.

At the beginning of 1976 no enemy were left in the west and there were about 100 active remaining in the central and eastern areas. Continuing pressure was kept on them by mounting Battalion level operations to encourage them to surrender. BATT teams and Firqat were returned to the east, ironically where they started 5 years previously. A major operation, Operation Farash, was mounted during 1 - 10 March, using 7 companies and BATT and Firqat from the Qatn down to Wadi Darbat and on Jebel Al Shaur, which resulted in several important surrenders.



Handover / Takeover at Sarfait

In early February a roulement occurred. JR took over from MR at Sarfait and DR took over from NFR

Clockwise from above: MR and JR at the handover / takeover; The Ops room at Sarfait; A patrol around Sarfait; The JR Officer's mess; View from JR TAC HQ



Victory Parade

MR and NFR were flown back to Seeb from Dhofar and were welcomed on arrival by Sayyid Thuwaini. Both Regiments then marched from the airport to MAM. The route was lined by the local population, who threw flowers in the path of the troops.



Left: Sayyid Thuwaini greets victorious MR and NFR troops on their return to the north from Dhofar

Above and right: NFR troops march past Sayyid Thuwaini

Top right: MR march from Seeb airport as part of the victory parade after returning from Dhofar



Above: NFR arrive at Seeb from Dhofar and form up prior to marching to MAM

Cease Fire

On 10 March 1976 an official announcement was made that a ceasefire had been agreed with Yemen (PDRY). At the same time HM the Sultan declared an amnesty for PFLO members in exile, who could return to the Sultanate without fear of arrest.

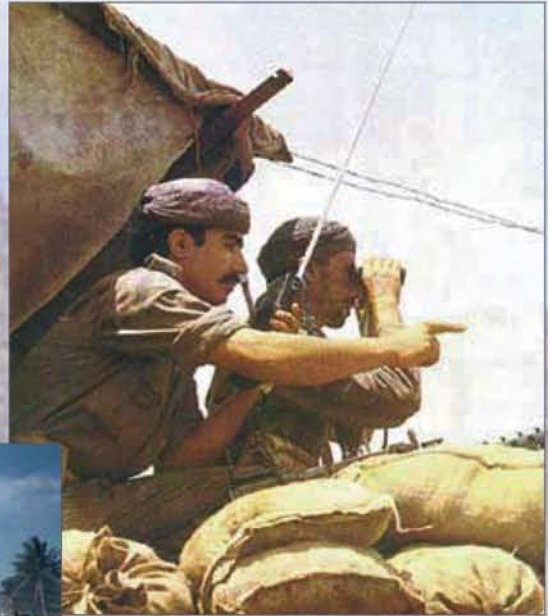
THE FINAL REBEL ACTIVITIES

Continuing PFLO Threat

Enemy Special Forces continued to make incursions from PDRY and small contacts occurred in the central and eastern areas. Enemy continued to surrender, and battalion size operations, such as Operation Bawsh (9-23 June 1976), continued to be mounted to root out remaining enemy.

The eastern area continued to be the most problematical and Operation Hashish Mahrug was mounted on 7 November with seven companies from FF and KJ, with artillery, armoured car and engineer support. The Operation ended successfully on 9 December, having forced the enemy to abandon previously safe villages.

Traces of enemy activity existed in the central area as well, where the odd contact occurred and the occasional surrender happened.



Border OP overlooking the PDRY border



Above: A KJ convoy on its way to Taqa

Below: KJ Infantry and armoured car in Wadi Ghazir, February 1976



Below: His Majesty with the CO of NFR, visiting the troops in Dhofar, 1977



A KJ Patrol on operations in the eastern area, 1977



Activities after 1976

By mid-1977 the total number of enemy was estimated at only 50. The security concerns focussed mainly on the tensions on the border and the nuisance created by the small remaining hard-core in the east.

Regular operations were mounted in the eastern area to flush out enemy bases. Contacts occurred in April and June 1977 and on 2 June 1978 some Airwork employees were shot at Khawr Rawri. A few days later on 9 June an SOA convoy was ambushed on the Thumrait Road. By November 1978 persistent operations had forced three of the hard-core to flee to PDRY, and a general reduction in activity, so much so that the newly appointed Commander Southern Oman Brigade, Amed Hamad bin Manah Al Mamari, announced that a large number of the bases maintained throughout the Jebel were to be closed. This would permit the creation of a complete reserve battalion and enable the Army to considerably increase patrolling and ambushing activities.



Above left: An SFE vehicle patrol

Above: An SFE convoy moves out to a water re-supply project on the jebel



1979

The year 1979 saw the transition from a wartime footing to normal peacetime activities almost completed, with only a few scattered enemy left in the east.

Operations did still occur. Two FF companies mounted one on 1 May on Jebel Aram, and although some enemy were killed so was the Company Commander. KJ mounted operations in the east and WFR along the Salalah/ Thumrait Road, all of which resulted in contacts.

In the years following 1979, patrolling along the borders settled into a routine pattern, and the Army maintained regular patrols throughout the jebel, giving medical aid and other assistance to the civilian population as well as searching for the enemy.

The regular infantry Battalions continued a pattern of roulement between north and south, while the Baluch Battalions of FF, KJ and WFR maintained permanent duties in Dhofar.

FRONTIER FORCE REUNION LUNCHEON



Former officers of the Frontier Force, their Ladies and guests held a luncheon on the 26 November 2015 at the Cavalry & Guards Club to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of Dhofar being declared "Secure for Civil Development" on 2 December 1975. In his address *Peter Isaacs* welcomed

86 past members of Frontier Force and 17 guests. *Clive Ward* then named absent comrades including those FF officers who had died in the service of HM The Sultan and those who have subsequently died. For full details contact: Peter Isaacs – peter.isaacs274@btinternet.com



Donal Douglas – 5th CO FF, Rod Tracy and Maj Gen David O'Morche, Last British CSOLF.



Jonathan Salusbury-Trelawney and Lady Shirley Akehurst.

OMAN GUNNERS 2015 LUNCH

We had a full house attendance of 21 in the recently refurbished Medal Room at Armoury House, Honourable Artillery Company on 22 September. Unfortunately **Nigel Knocker**, who regularly attends, was unable to join us on this occasion and sent his apologies. We were all particularly delighted to welcome **Ian MacLucas** who was able to be with us for the first time. Ian was posted to D Bty 1 Regt OA as Tp Comd/FOO in June '74 and deployed to Sarfait where his troop was in direct support of KJ. In early January '75 he was assigned to Jebel Regiment for OP Dharab as FOO with **Nigel Loring**. Ian was seriously wounded and evacuated during the operation. It was good to have him with us.

Hugh Colley welcomed **Bugs Hughes** and appreciated the effort he had made to attend. It was a pleasure to have as our guests **David Venn** and **Rupert Robson**. David was on the staff of HQ Dhofar in 1971/2 and a great supporter of OA in the early days. David is contributing to the OA historical record particularly with the emphasis on the links with Intelligence which is providing a valu-

able independent assessment for the editors. Rupert Robson joined 2 SOA in January '86 towards the final Omanisation stage. An interesting period with **Saoud bin Suleiman al Habsi** taking over command of 2 SOA and **Jumma Salim** already positioned as Comd SOA and **Jamsher** as BC HQ Battery – all names most of us remember as young recruits. So the lunch attendance reflected our contribution to the making of SOA in 16 years. Congratulations to Rupert who has recently been appointed RA Regimental Secretary.

Miles Thomson and **David MacFadden**, joint editors of the OA historical record in the Dhofar War, reported on the progress of the history and expressed their appreciation on the quality and wide ranging contributions they had received. They especially identified the help they have received from Gunners and other arms outside OA organisation.

Hugh mentioned that **Mike Hardy** had now organised the annual lunch for 15 years and expressed our gratitude on behalf of all those present. ■



Left to right. Front row: Bugs Hughes (OA), Ian MacLucas (OA) and Hugh Colley (OA). Rear row: Chris Long-Price (OA), John Lewis (OA), Douglas MacLaine (OA), Miles Thomson (OA), Mike Hardy (OA), John Kirkham (OA), Nick Holbrook (SOAF), Jerry Yeoman (OA), Mike Lobb (BATT), Graham Smith (Staff), David MacFadden (OA), Rupert Robson (SOA), David Venn (Staff), Julian Paxton (Shell) and Will Cook (OA). Attended but not in photo John Dean (OA).

COST OF OVERSEAS POSTAGE FOR THE JOURNAL

As you will be well aware the cost of posting the Journal overseas is expensive. There are 112 overseas members and the committee is considering requesting that overseas members read the online version which is on the SAF website. A hard copy would be posted to those who requested it. To help planning, would any overseas member who would not be content with this proposal please let the Hon Sec know at

neil.fawcett@btinternet.com

THIS WOULD APPLY FROM THE 2017 ISSUE.

WESSEX LUNCH

On 26 July 2015 some 65 members, together with wives and guests, were at The Camelot in Somerset for another excellent annual Wessex Lunch.



2016 WESSEX LUNCH

This year's Wessex Lunch will be on **Sunday 31 July 2016** and will take the form of a Curry Buffet at the **Sherborne Golf Club, Higher Clatford, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 4RN. www.sherbornegolfclub.co.uk** The price will remain at £25 per head, which will include curry, choice of three, with the usual accompaniments, choice of puddings, coffee, wines and other beverages from the bar. Booking requests should be sent to **John Kirkham, The Old Rectory, Oake, Taunton, Somerset TA41AR** together with a cheque made payable to: **Wessex Lunch**. If a receipt or acknowledgement is required please provide an email address or SAE. Early booking is advised as places are limited.

REMEMBERING...

Major J E Grahame Vivian MC* WkhM **28 October 1919 - 10 July 2015**



Grahame Vivian was born in Cornwall and educated at Repton. He enlisted in the Somerset Light Infantry on 15 October 1939 and was gazetted with an Emergency Commission in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. Volunteering to serve with the Indian Army, he transferred to 8 Gurkha Rifles which moved to the Arakan at the end of 1943. Grahame was severely wounded whilst commanding D Company 4/8 during an attack on Dhobi Hill against strong Japanese opposition on the night of 9 January 1944 and was subsequently awarded a Military Cross. Two of his surviving men made a stretcher from two rifles and carried him for three days back to the regimental base. Due to the severity of his wounds, he was not expected to survive. He spent a year recovering before being evacuated by ship to the Princess Elizabeth Orthopedic Hospital in Exeter for a further year. Grahame was granted a weekend leave to get married in May 1945. A significant honour was Grahame's selection as one of only three Gurkha British Officers to take part in the Victory Parade in London in 1946.

On Partition, 8 Gurkha Rifles became part of the Indian Army so Grahame transferred to 2 Ghoorka Rifles which remained part of the British Army.

In March 1948 he was posted to Malaya where he was Administrative Officer at The Far East Land Forces Training Centre in Lahore Bahru. From 1953 to 1956 he was OC HQ Company in Hong Kong, returning to Malaya for the Emergency where he commanded A Company. On one highly unusual and successful operation against the Chinese terrorists in the Kuala Pilah District of Negri Sembilan between 28 September and 7 October 1956, he was awarded a Bar to his Military Cross. Grahame returned to the UK in December 1959 and retired in April 1960.

At the end of 1960 Grahame joined SAF where he was Deputy Commander of Oman Gendarmerie until 1965, then Commander Coastal Patrol in dhows until 1966. He rejoined Oman Gendarmerie until 1970 when he joined Oman Research Department (now Internal Security Service) until 1973. In 1973 he was appointed Jebel Liaison Officer at Saiq on Jebel Al Akhdar reporting directly to

Sayyid Fahr bin Taimur Al Said. He continued in this post until his retirement in 1985, when he returned to the UK.

Grahame was a real adventurer with a distinguished service record both in the British and Indian armies, and then in SAF where he was awarded a WKhM in 1983. He was a great linguist, speaking Gurkhal, Hindi, Urdu and Arabic, as well as the Jebel Akhdar dialect.

A Thanksgiving Service in memory of Grahame was held in Winchester Cathedral on 31 October 2015 and was attended by some 65 of Grahame's family, friends and colleagues from Gurkhas, SAF and ORD, followed by a curry lunch in the Gurkha Museum where his family presented Grahame's medals to the Museum.

His first wife **Gwen** died in 1986; he remarried in 1996 to **Lorna** and they lived in Cornwall until his death on 10 July 2015. We extend our sympathy to Lorna, **Marcia** and her two brothers, **Barney** and **Teddy**.

MCL, IDG, MW

David J Cuthbertson

David passed away on 29 August 2015 after a two year fight with cancer. David was seconded from the Small Arms School Corps to the Sultan's Armed Forces in September 1974 as the first SASC Training Adviser SAF and OC Courses Company at SAFTR, Ghallah. The SAFTR appointment was supported by **Graeme Smith-Pigott**, assisted by **Neil Lamb** and **Charlie Daniels** who conducted the Officer Courses and a team of 12 British Senior NCO's as Instructors in courses for platoon weapons, 81mm mortar, GPMG SF, tracker and sniper elements.

Having taken over from **Alan Fearnley** (WFR) there were range development projects to be completed: The Saiq Battle Camp Ranges, the ATA ETR at SAFTR and various other training buildings in SAFTR.

His tour ended in April 1976 and for his work with SAF he was awarded the Sultan's Commendation Medal.

He returned to Oman on a one year communications project from PDO in the North to Marmul in the South with Cable and Wireless, followed by six years in Saudi Arabia.

From 2003, David has each year visited the Oman Shooting Team at Bisley during the Methuen Match and has always been delighted to see their successes and standards which were initiated just after his tour with SAF.

He is survived by his widow **Mary**, sons David and Andrew and eight grandchildren.

David's funeral was held on Friday 25 September at 13:30 at St Sampson's Church, Cricklade, Wiltshire SN6 6AT.

David Woodcock

David Woodcock died on 9 June from motor neurone disease. David graduated from RMA Sandhurst in 1971 winning the Infantry Prize and was commissioned into the Parachute Regiment. He joined FF as 2i/c A Company in 1975 shortly before the commencement of post monsoon operations which resulted in the successful conclusion of the Dhofar campaign. He was badly wounded in the Sherishitti caves during Operation Hadaf losing a leg.

PJ Isaacs

Squadron Leader BWP (Barry) West

Barry West died at the age of 78, on the 27 July 2015. Although he had been ill for a number of years, he was determined not to be knocked off course and had appeared to be returning to full health and enjoying his recovery.

Barry was commissioned as a pilot into the Royal Air Force in 1955. His flying training took place in Canada and subsequently he flew the Beverley in Aden, the Belfast and the Varsity. In 1970 he retired from the RAF and joined SOAF on contract. Initially, he flew the Skyvan for two years, spending much time supporting operations in Dhofar, followed by two years on the Viscount, and he then flew the BAC 1-11 for 23 years. When the opportunities arose, he also flew the Falcon and the Gulfstream G11. His appointments included senior training captain, instrument rating examiner, conversion captain and anything else that needed his skills, dedication and enthusiasm. He left Oman in 1997 after 27 years, but continued to train and check RAFO BAC 1-11 pilots on the simulator, firstly at Heathrow, and later at Bournemouth, for a period of nearly 12 years. It was only the introduction of the Airbus to RAFO that brought the second phase of his lengthy career with RAFO to an end.



Whilst in Oman, Barry met and married **Mandy**. During his time there, he became the Oman kart-racing champion, water skied, wind-surfed, and was a founder member of the SAF beach club. Underpinning all of his activities was a strong affection for Oman and the Omanis. He relished living in the country, much admired the Omani character and sense of humour, and wanted the trainee pilots in his care to fly at least as well as he did. In turn, his Omani colleagues had huge affection and respect for Barry and recognised the strength of his commitment to them and to the development of flying in RAFO. In recognition of all that he had contributed, he was awarded the Order of the Special Royal Emblem by **HM The Sultan** in 1985.

On returning to the UK, he and Mandy settled at Winterborne Clenston in Dorset. They kept in touch with many SAF contemporaries, not least through Barry's staunch membership of the SAF Association Committee. A service to celebrate his life was held on the 7 August 2015 at Yeovil Crematorium. Members of the Association and his family acted as pall-bearers and a eulogy was delivered by **Sander Carling**. A large number of family and friends, as well as SAF Association members, attended. Moreover, among a number of former school friends who had kept in touch with him for over 60 years, was **Hugh Colley**.

He is survived by his widow, Mandy, by his daughters **Rebekah**,

Tania and **Cordelia**, and his three grandchildren, to all of whom we extend our very sincere condolences.

By Tony Nicholson and Kieron Shaw

Afternote by Nigel K.

Those of us who were in DR may remember the first Skyvan to land on the newly made strip at Sarfait a few days after we had established the position. the pilot was Barry. As he landed a huge cheer went up all around the position! A moment I always remembered with Barry.

Hugh Leach

Hugh Leach died on 15 November 2015 aged 81. Hugh joined the Foreign Office in 1964 having spent nine years with the Royal Tank Regiment where he was sitting in the first tank to land at Port Fouad at the North end of the Suez Canal when the British and French forces landed there in 1956.

In the FCO, Hugh was posted in Aden, Amman, Jeddah, Cairo, Sana'a and Khartoum. While he was in Amman he was captured while laying vole traps for a naturalist friend of his on a visit to the Kerak Hills. His Arabic skills saw him released two days later. While in Jeddah, Hugh was the first diplomat to drive overland to Sana'a discovering en route a lost tribe of Israel, which the Israelis themselves thought had become extinct in 1948.

He collected 600 plant specimens for the Natural History Museum and while on three months' leave, Hugh discovered the source of the Oxus river in Afghanistan.

Suzie Quinn writes: "If you want to read an amusing account of Hugh's varied life, google 'peckhampeccoliar Hugh Leach'. As you may know he lived in Peckham in Choumert Square as well as having a home in Somerset. He was one of the most unusual people I have ever met, was the greatest fun to work for, a leading expert on Islam and definitely a reincarnation of Lawrence of Arabia. In his account of his life, he mentions a circus in which he had part ownership. I will always remember his story of the circus coming to Cairo when he was stationed there. Some of them stayed with him and the circus snake was kept in a laundry basket in his bathroom. One evening the ringmaster was ill and Hugh took his place – the full regalia of top hat, tails and whip – little realising that his opposite number in the Russian Embassy was sitting in the front row of the audience!! My other memory of Hugh was also in Cairo when I went on holiday there and was staying in a hotel alongside the Pyramids. Hugh came to take me out driving his own pony and trap but because he was looking rather scruffy the guards at the gate wouldn't let him into the hotel grounds and I had to go outside."

David Insall

David Insall died in Wales on 9 August 2015 aged 76 years. David graduated from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in 1958. He was commissioned into the Royal Signals. He was an excellent target rifle marksman, and in 1967, he became the British Army's Pistol Champion.

He joined HQ SAF in 1970 as a GSO 3 (Ops) and then became GSO 2 (Ops) in 1972. He then transferred to SOAF/RAFO in July 1975. He was awarded the WKhM in July 1979 and the Order of Oman Class 3 (Mil) in July 1982. He was a man of many parts.



David will be remembered for his considerable contributions to the Sultanate. He played an important role in the country with RAFO where he became head of recruiting and training. He then became deeply interested in the country, its environment, heritage and its people.

His environmental work included studies of the Arabian 'tahr' (Waal Al Arabi), founding the Wadi Sareen Nature Reserve in 1973, and helping to found the Environment Society of Oman (ESO), in which he was an active member.

He was also an adviser to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Affairs where he wrote Oman's environmental guidelines and nature conservation policies.

Apart from being an environmentalist, David was also fascinated by Oman's history and culture. He helped recruit the country's first Director of Antiquities in 1973, encouraged the restoration of Jabreen Castle, and while studying Omani code languages, he was appointed to the National Committee for the Protection of the National Heritage by Royal Decree in 1980.

David trekked all over Oman on foot in the early 1970s, exploring the country from top to bottom. He got to know the people very well and as soon as someone told him their family name, he could identify where they were from and ask about their tribal leaders, doing so all in Arabic.

He also helped found the Historical Association of Oman, an organisation in which he was active for years.

His contributions to Oman were recognised in 1982 when he was awarded the Order of Oman personally by **His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said**.

We send our sincere condolences to **Jeannette** and his family.

Ian Shuttleworth

Ian Shuttleworth sadly died on 23 May 2015 aged 71. Whilst he was not in SAF or a member of the Association, Ian came to many of our events always accompanied by his twin brother, **Richard**, an Association member. Ian was well known to so many of us.

Ian had a remarkable life. He was in the RN and became a helicopter pilot. He was badly injured in a car accident and as a result was paralysed from the chest down for the rest of his life. This did not prevent him from leading as normal a life as he could. He set up a bar in Spain; was a member of the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights and was a member of the St Moritz Tobogganing Club. He was much involved with the Jubilee Sailing Trust (which aims to facilitate sailing for the disabled) for 35 years for which he raised millions of pounds. This included completing a sky dive and racing in a bobsleigh down the track at St Moritz!

Ian was modest about his many achievements and never com-

plained. When asked what life was like in a wheelchair he replied, "Every day is a real bastard, but as there is nothing I can do about it, the only solution is to make the best of every day and try and smile." He did – and what an example to us all.

Our sympathy goes to Ian's family. He will be much missed. ■

DEATHS

The following deaths have also been recorded:

8 Nov 14	N S Porter RAO
21 Nov 14	Mike Nolan MOD Finance Dept
19 Ap 15	Marigold de Winton (Wife of John) COS HQ SON
May 15	Tony Carey MR 66-68
24 May 15	Ian Shuttleworth (see obit)
June 15	Peter Hitchcock
June 15	Charles Nicholls
10 Jul 15	Grahame Vivian OG; Coastal Patrol; Jebel Akhdar LO (See obit)
29 Jul 15	Helen Aurther (Widow of Dick Aurther)
2 Aug 15	Mark Elliot Legg NFR 62-65
Aug 15	Roly Parsons SOAF/RAFO
8 Aug 15	David Insall (see obit)
29 Aug 15	David Cuthbertson SAFTR 74-76 (see obit)
15 Nov 15	Hugh Leach (see obit)
21 Nov 15	Gareth Davis JR 76-77
23 Jan 16	Jim Ross SOAF/helis Q H I

JOINED IN 2015

Charlie Dalziel	RAO 13-15
Ian Penny	RAO 84-88
Gordie Baker	OA 73-75
Andy Dunsire	Airworks 70-77 and 79-99
Mary Holbrook	ROP Air Wing 81-84
Caroline Kemp	SOLG 81-84
Kevin Meeds	RNO 11-15
Gordon Judd	SOAR 86-88
John Kedar	Engineers 89-90

LOST CONTACT IN 2015

Col Adcock	Salisbury
Dr R Aga	Medway Hospital
J Lemon	Wilton
RA McMahon	Tidworth
Cdr M Spiller	Swanmore
JDJA Turner	Barclays Bank
S Watson	Edinburgh

PLEASE LET US HAVE UP-TO-DATE CONTACT DETAILS, HOME AND EMAIL ADDRESSES.

THE JOURNAL

OF THE
SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES
ASSOCIATION



The Journal is the official magazine of the Sultan's Armed Forces Association. It serves a readership which is actively involved in the development of the country. Published each year for the last 47 years, and with a current print run of 4,000 copies, the Sultan's Armed Forces Association Journal is circulated to all individual and company members of the Association as well as:

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- International Suppliers of Equipment and Services to the Oman Armed Services
- Communications, Ports and Construction Industry
- Non-defence Industrial and Trade Companies and Organisations
- Omani Chamber of Commerce
- UK Foreign Office (Middle East Department)
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Quarter page	£300 (O. Rials 185)	£250 (O.Rials 155)

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SAF ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GOLF MATCH

MONDAY, 13 JUNE, 2016
DORSET GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB,
NR WAREHAM

For directions see www.dorsetgolfresort.com

SCHEDULE:	09.00-10.00	Arrive – coffee with bacon butty served
	09.40-10.52	28 Stroke Handicap Stableford on 7000 yards Lakeland Course in groups of 3
	Approx 15.30	3 Course lunch with prize giving
	Approx 17.00	Depart

This will be the twenty-first year of the event and we are looking for 30+ gentleman and Lady players to turn out this year. The occasion is intended to be both sporting and fun and certainly the first 20 competitions have been extremely enjoyable. The facilities at the Dorset Golf and Country Club are excellent and it is only 2 hours by car from Heathrow, 1 hour from Southampton and 20 minutes from Dorchester. Wool railway station is 2 hours 15 minutes from Waterloo. Applications are limited to 28 handicappers or less from the SAF Association or Anglo/Omani Society, or anyone who can be shown to be a friend of the Sultanate. Spouses may attend lunch only for £18.00. Club members will be charged £23.00. £15 for one of three buggies allocated.

SAF ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GOLF MATCH

MONDAY, 13 JUNE, 2016
DORSET GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

For directions see www.dorsetgolfresort.com

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2016 SAF ASSOCIATION DINNER

will take place in the

ARMY AND NAVY CLUB, PALL MALL, LONDON AT 1900 FOR 2000HRS ON

FRIDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2016

PLEASE APPLY BY FRIDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2016 AT THE LATEST

To: Neil Fawcett, Two Oaks, Mayfield Fold, Rock Lane, Burnley BB11 2RN. Email: neil.fawcett@btinternet.com

FROM: (BLOCK CAPS)

ADDRESS:

Service(s)Unit(s) in SAF:

Dates of service in SAF:

I would like to sit near:

THE ABOVE INFORMATION WILL ASSIST IN SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

Please send me ticket(s) at **£40** each for the Dinner on **Friday 25 November 2016**.

Other guests **£50** per head.

Please list name(s) of guests

I enclose a cheque for £ made payable to the SAF Association.

PLEASE APPLY BY FRIDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2016 AT THE LATEST



SEE SEPARATE NOTE ABOUT THE PARTY AND CANCELLATION ON PAGE 4

2016 SAF ASSOCIATION COCKTAIL PARTY

will take place in the

ARMY AND NAVY CLUB, PALL MALL, LONDON BETWEEN 1830 AND 2030HRS ON

FRIDAY 10 JUNE 2016

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To: Neil Fawcett, Two Oaks, Mayfield Fold, Rock Lane, Burnley BB11 2RN. Email: neil.fawcett@btinternet.com

FROM: (BLOCK CAPS)

ADDRESS:

Please send me ticket(s) for the SAF Association Cocktail Party on **Friday 10 June 2016**.

Costs are **£25** per person or **£40** per couple.

Other guests **£30** per head.

Please list names of guests

I enclose a cheque for £ made payable to the SAF Association.

Or book by email and pay your fee into the SAF Association's Bank Account: Sort Code 40-15-17 Account No. 72019116 (HSBC Burnley)

PLEASE APPLY BY FRIDAY 27 MAY 2016 AT THE LATEST

REORGANISATION AND EXPANSION – PART I

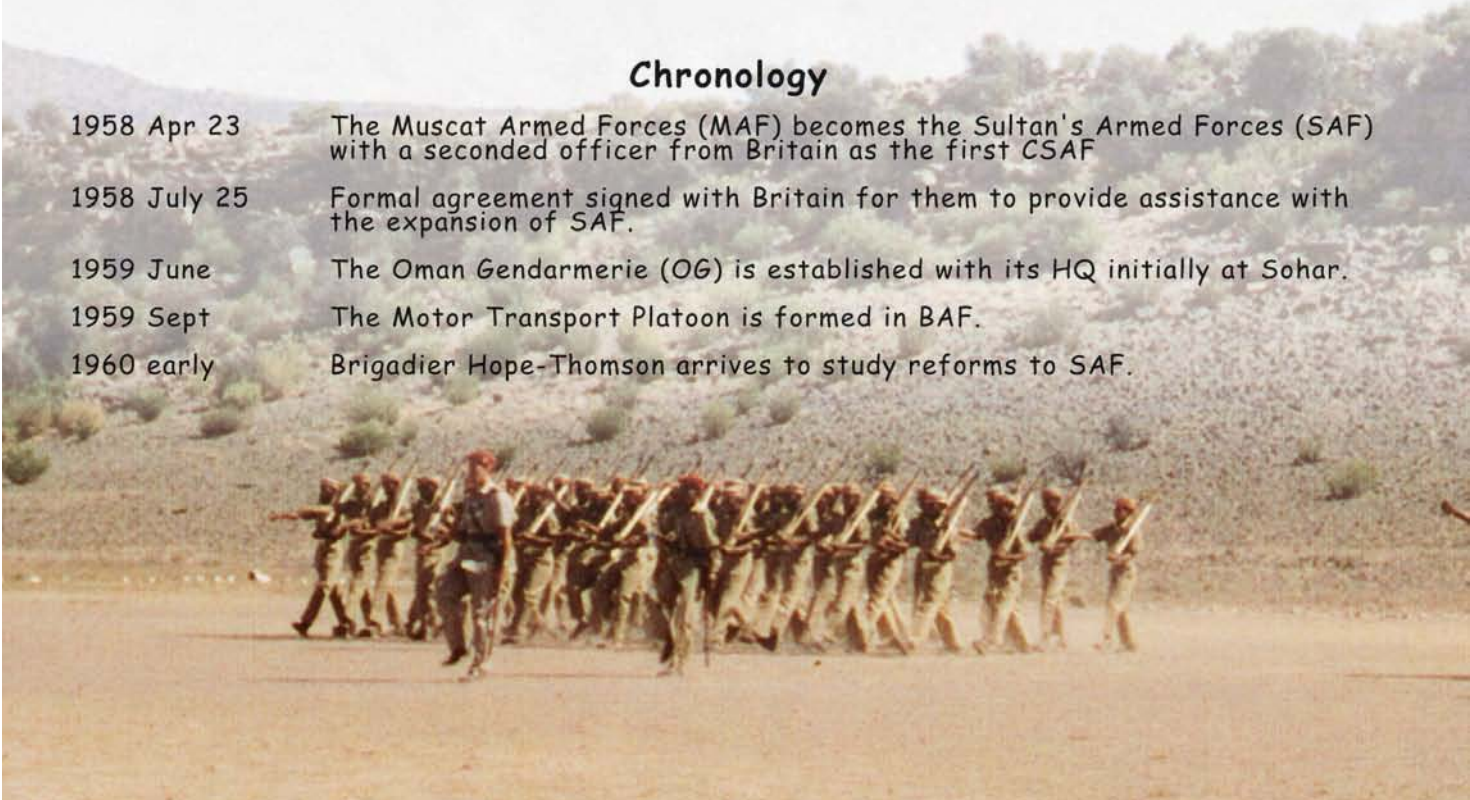
SAF DEVELOPMENT FROM 1958 TO 1970

by Ian Buttenshaw

This article continues on from the article in the last Journal about the Jebel Akhdar War. SAF had been formed during this conflict, but following its successful conclusion in February 1959, it was essential to develop and retrain SAF to better defend the now united Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. This article covers SAF's general transformation from 1958 up to the Accession of HM Sultan Qaboos in July 1970. It specifically excludes the early years of the Dhofar conflict that started in 1965, which are being covered in the "40 Years On" series of articles.

Chronology

1958 Apr 23	The Muscat Armed Forces (MAF) becomes the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) with a seconded officer from Britain as the first CSAF
1958 July 25	Formal agreement signed with Britain for them to provide assistance with the expansion of SAF.
1959 June	The Oman Gendarmerie (OG) is established with its HQ initially at Sohar.
1959 Sept	The Motor Transport Platoon is formed in BAF.
1960 early	Brigadier Hope-Thomson arrives to study reforms to SAF.



1960 mid	The Independent Guard Unit (later known as Muscat Garrison Guard Unit) is formed in BAF.
1960 May	The Coastal Patrol is formed as part of OG and begins its first patrol along the Batinah.
1960 Aug 4	The Hope-Thomson Report is accepted by HH Sultan Said bin Taimur, and implementation commences
1960 - late	Artillery Troop expanded to Battery size on receipt of their new 25 pounder guns
1961 early	An Ordnance Section is established in BAF
1961 early	MR is released from Garrison duties and starts retraining at a new camp at Bid Bid
1961 mid	SAF Signals Troop established at BAF
1962	The Training Depot is redesignated SAF Training Centre (SAFTC)
1962 Feb	Rotation of Battalions between Nizwa and Bid Bid commences (NFR move to Bid Bid, MR to Nizwa)
1962	First Force Electrical and Mechanical Engineer Officer (FEME) appointed
1964 Jul	The Ordnance Depot is established at BAF.
1964 Nov	Troops from SAF (NFR) operate in Dhofar for the first time
1965 May	SAF (MR) operates in Dhofar in Battalion strength for the first time.
1965 late	A second MT Platoon is raised
1966 Jan	Red Company, the first troops for the new Desert Regiment (DR), is formed within NFR.
1967 early	Signals Detachment in Dhofar expanded to a troop
1967 April	The last of DR companies form up and the Battalion reaches full strength
1969 Jan	Second-in-Command OG is transferred to Muscat Police as Commissioner and SAFTC trains first recruits for the newly restructured Police Force.
1969	The Medical Section is redesignated Force Medical Unit (FMU)
1969	Baluch Askaris are recruited to guard the Salalah Perimeter (These were to become the Baluch Guard and later the Frontier Force)
1969 Aug	The Ordnance Depot is redesignated the Force Ordnance Depot (FOD) and an Ordnance Maintenance Park is established at Midway (Thumrait)
1969 late	The all Baluch Z Company of MUSGAR Guard Company is stationed in Salalah to patrol the plains.
1970 Jun 21	The Sultan of Oman's Navy (SON) is formed and incorporates the OG Coastal Patrol.



AFTERMATH OF THE CAPTURE OF JEBEL AKHDAR

Success on the Jebel in January 1959 did not put an end to the rebellion, since the leaders and many of the hard core dissidents were able to escape the country and find refuge and assistance abroad. Inside Oman, individuals, weapons, ammunition, mines and explosives were regularly smuggled into the country. This enabled minor attacks on army outposts, a campaign of vigorous mining on nearly every main road in the country, and various acts of sabotage in the capital area. SAF had to deploy to meet these threats.

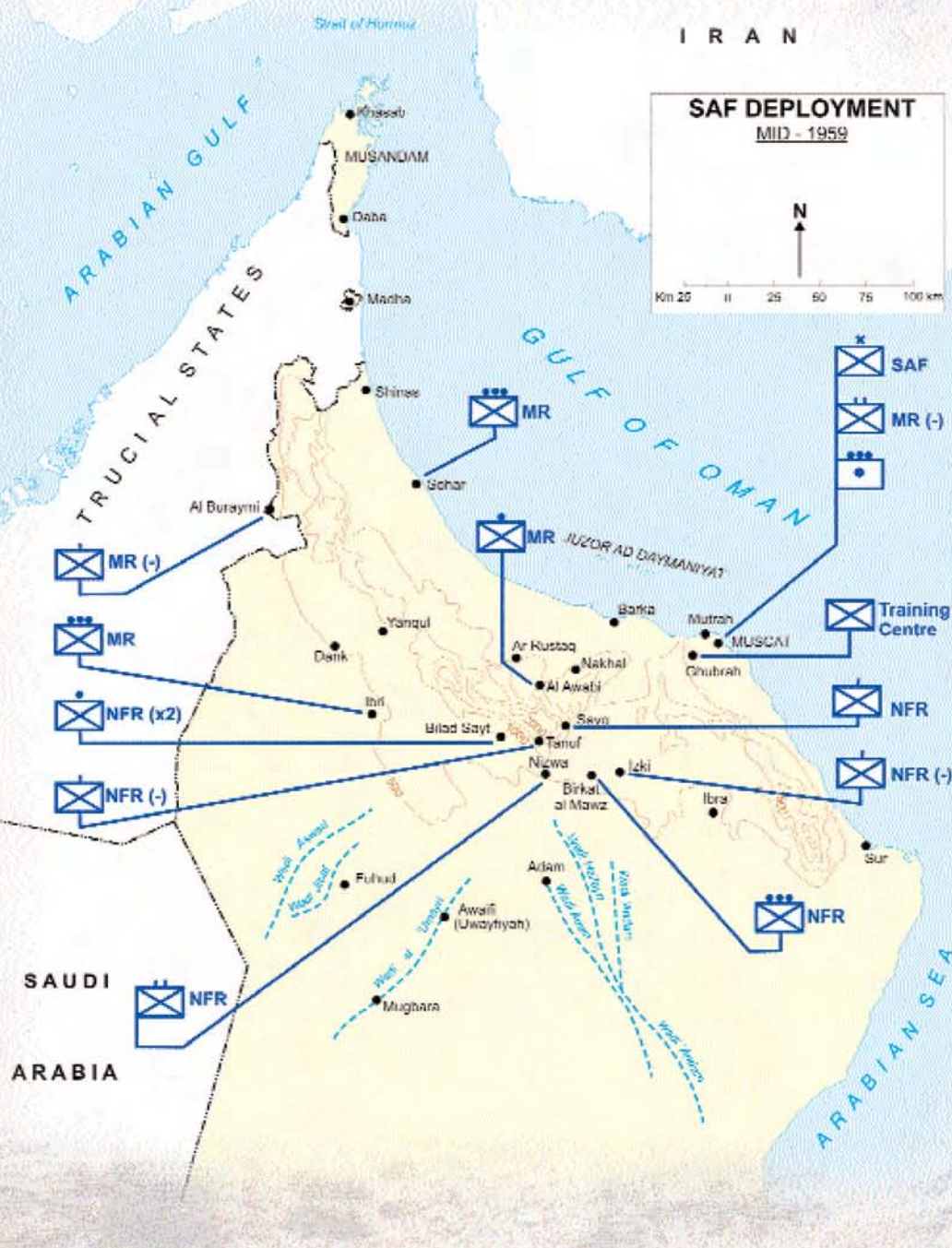
Redeployment

Following the departure of the SAS and other British Troops after the successful capture of the Jebel Akhdar, a general SAF deployment around the Jebel was required to continue to dominate the country, re-establish government control to make way for civil development, and above all to find any hardcore rebels still in hiding.

The deployment approved by the Sultan in 1959 was as follows:

- ▶ HQ SAF, MR and the Artillery Troop at Bait Al Falaj
- ▶ A company of MR (which had been assembled out of the remnants of OR) to Buraimi, less one Platoon at both Sohar and Ibri, plus the outpost at Awabi.
- ▶ NFR, based at Nizwa with:
 1. a company at Saiq (on Jebel Akhdar)
 2. a half-company less a platoon at Izki
 3. a platoon at Birkat al Mawz
 4. a half company at Tanuf less two sections at Bilad Sait.
- ▶ Training Depot at Ghubrah.

These deployments allowed SAF to cover thinly most of the hot spots in northern Oman, but they were not allowed to operate in the Sharqiyah initially, although by 1960, intelligence gathering patrols were allowed to enter, but no permanent camps were permitted until much later.



Formation of Oman Gendarmerie (OG)

It became fairly evident that the size of SAF could not adequately cover all the tasks required; mine laying was on the increase by mid 1959 and the movement of weapons and mines into the country was relatively easy. Thus, CSAF conceived the idea to form a Gendarmerie of about 120 men, which could move among the people, cover the Northern Border and provide intelligence to SAF, as well as relieve the Infantry Battalions of routine duties.

Accordingly, Oman Gendarmerie (OG) began to form up and train at Bait Kashmir in Sohar in June 1959. It's Headquarters was later moved to Azaiba, near Muscat, in early 1960. It was immediately put to work along the Batinah Coast and around Buraimi to deter gun runners, and it assisted in customs checks at border posts. It quickly became the largest unit in SAF, as well as the most widespread, and its troopers were distinguished from ordinary soldiers by their blue and white shemagh headgear and grey mazri shirts.

By 1963, OG had grown to a total strength of 253, had moved its headquarters to Seeb, and was divided into three sectors: Central (with elements at Seeb and Suwaiq on the Batinah), North (Sohar and the border posts at Aswad and Khatmat Milahah), and West (Buraimi and Mahadah).

Below: MR Patrol at Saiq



An Officer inspecting OG Guard at Bait Kashmir, Sohar, shortly after formation of OG in May 1959



Above and below: OG Patrol conducting a search of a camel train on the Batinah Coast, late 1959



Left: A vehicle undergoing a search by OG at the Aswad Border Post



Above and left: The OG Border Post at Aswad



REVIEW OF THE SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES

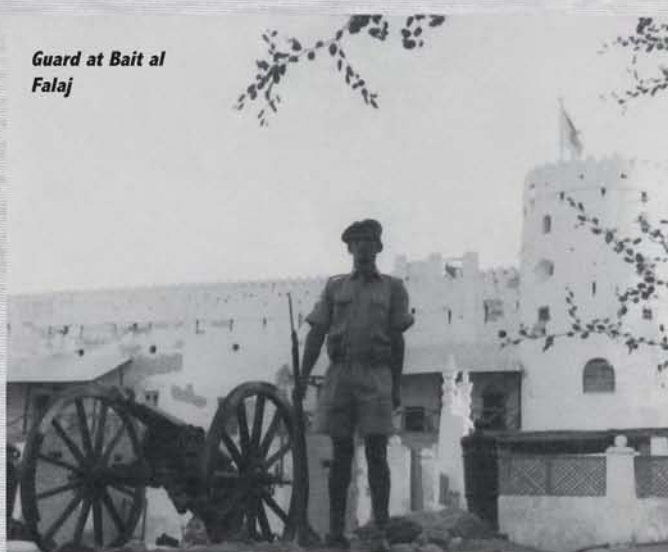
Additional to the formation of OG, British assistance was provided by Naval Patrols along the Batinah, patrolling by Ferret Scout Cars and joint exercises. It was obviously time for an overall review of the size and shape of SAF, in order to pre-empt a resumption of rebel activities.

To assist in the reorganisation of SAF, Britain sent out Brigadier Hope-Thomson, who had discussions with the various interested parties, particularly CSAF and the Military Secretary. He produced a comprehensive report and recommendation that the total of all ranks (including Defence Department, Army, Air Force, Gendarmerie and Coastal Patrol) should be 2,245. Hope-Thomson set out a full list of recommendations and a shorter list of points he could not recommend.

The report was discussed with the Sultan who accepted it completely, with the first year of expansion beginning in October 1960.

Only the independent guard unit was formed in the first year, which was mainly devoted to the expansion of existing units. By September 1961 the Force numbered 1,765.

The expansion continued and during the second year a company and a Recce Platoon were added to the Muscat Regiment and three more troops for Oman Gendarmerie.



Omanisation/Recruiting

The first Omanisation of officers also appeared during this time. By mid-1960, seven 'Local Officers' were deployed within SAF: Lieutenant Shinun Ubayd as OC Headquarters Company at Bait al Falaj; Lieutenant Abdullah Saif, MR Mobile Group at Bait al Falaj; Lieutenant Ali Muhammad, A Company of MR at Rustaq; Lieutenant Muhammad Jalal, A Company of NFR at Izki; Lieutenant Hasan Hasun, B Company of NFR at Ibri; Second Lieutenant Said Salim, C Company of NFR at Saiq and Second Lieutenant Ibrahim Sulayman at the Training Depot at Ghallah. In terms of other ranks, a balance was actively maintained between the three types of soldier: Omani Arab, Omani Baluch and Gwadur (or Makrani) Baluch.

Recommendations of Hope Thomson Report (1960)

Principal Positive Recommendations :

- (1) A new camp at Bid Bid and completion of existing camps to a necessary scale of permanent building.
- (2) A revised establishment for each of the two infantry battalions, totalling 671 all ranks each.
- (3) A Guard Company of 193.
- (4) A Force Camel Platoon for patrol duties.
- (5) A 4-gun 25-pounder Field Artillery Troop.
- (6) Retention of the 5.5-inch guns as an alternative weapon.
- (7) A Gendarmerie of 280, excluding the Coastal Patrol, with necessary troop posts to be built.
- (8) A Coastal Patrol, as the nautical branch of the Oman Gendarmerie of one boum (large dhow) with a crew of one captain and 16 other ranks.
- (9) An increase to SOAF of: two Provosts (one in reserve); one Twin Pioneer; one S/E Pioneer (already held); and pilots, administrative officers and maintenance staff as requested to scale.
- (10) Provision for increased scale of maintenance (but not enlargement) of Bait al Falaj airstrip.
- (11) Increased establishment for the Recruit Training Centre for 210 recruits, at 35 per month.
- (12) A Boys Training Platoon of 47.
- (13) Training ammunition scale to be increased.
- (14) Pay to be raised to a comparable standard with Trucial Oman Scouts (TOS).
- (15) Vehicle life to be reduced to two years.
- (16) Transport scales (in most cases) slightly increased.
- (17) Staff and services reorganised, involving a small overall increase.
- (18) Two more seconded British officers and 15 more contract British officers.
- (19) A Recruiting Team.
- (20) Works staff for the Defence Department (no recommendations as to civilian composition).
- (21) Improvements to Muscat port (under Civil Development)

Unable to Recommend

- (1) New permanent camps at Tanuf, Manah and Bahla.
- (2) A fourth rifle company for each infantry battalion.
- (3) A 75mm Artillery Troop or a personnel establishment for the 5.5-inch guns.
- (4) Ferret Troops.
- (5) Any Engineers (but an assault pioneer platoon to be allowed in each battalion).
- (6) Battalion camel platoons (but one small Force platoon allowed for).
- (7) A long air strip on al-Jebel al-Akhdar, or a road or ropeway up to it.
- (8) Tarmac surface for a long airstrip at Firq or for Bait al Falaj.
- (9) A second coastal patrol craft (at present).
- (10) Tarmac road surfacing for the route connecting Muttrah with Bait al Falaj and SOAF headquarters.



Headquarters of the Sultan's Armed Forces - Bait Al Falaj

Coastal Patrol

To assist OG with controlling smuggling activities along the Batinah Coast a Coastal Patrol was formed during 1960.

The Coastal Patrol (CP), forerunner of the present Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), began life as a branch of OG. The first dhow, a boum called 'Nasr al-Bahr' (also known as C1) and apparently purchased from Kuwait, undertook its first voyage in May 1960, patrolling the Batinah coast to prevent arms-smuggling and illegal immigration. A second boum, 'al-Ta'if', was chartered temporarily in 1966 to add patrolling capabilities between the Kuria Muria Islands (Juzur al Hallaniyat) and Ra's Darbat Ali on the border with Yemen, but it was too slow to be effective. Subsequently, another permanent boum was acquired, 'al Muntasir' (also known as C2).



Clockwise from above: Nasr Al Bahr, the first vessel to join the Coastal Patrol; the cookhouse aboard Nasr Al Bahr; New members of the Coastal Patrol about to board Nasr Al Bahr for sea going training; aboard Nasr al Bahr; the Commander's cabin



TRAINING AND EDUCATION – SAF PRIORITIES IN THE 1960S

The top priority was training. The overall security situation since 1957 had not allowed time or opportunity for any 'higher' training, and SAF had not possessed sufficient officers, NCOs, vehicles, or wireless sets and operators to allow command and effective control of operations at higher than company level. By 1961, company training had progressed to battalion training, and regular training exercises followed a seasonal cycle. Another priority lay in education. Under CSAF, Colonel Hugh Oldman, who replaced Colonel Smiley in 1961, SAF instituted a programme of education designed to combat the very low level of literacy. Instructors were engaged amongst Omanis who had obtained a modicum of education in the Gulf or privately. The most intensive education took place at the Training Depot at Ghallah (also referred to as Ghubrah), where the aim was to turn out recruits at the end of their 16-week course who were capable of reading and writing, multiplying, adding and subtracting, and who could pass a standard examination in either Arabic or Romanised Urdu (for Baluch recruits). With increasingly successful Omani recruiting in 1962, concentrated effort was made to train more tradesmen and specialists, signallers, medical orderlies, drivers, and assault pioneers.

By 1963, SAF's strength had grown to 2,377, including OG. The development of the Oman Gendarmerie was regarded as a complete success. As might be expected, its troops were deployed more widely around the country but an inferior rate of pay to the army stood out. In the same year, a three-year plan for reorganisation and expansion was laid out in 'The Review of the Sultan's Armed Forces'. This size-and-shape exercise came to form the pattern for annual planning on a three-year basis in succeeding years.

NFR tactical training in a Sangar at Izki

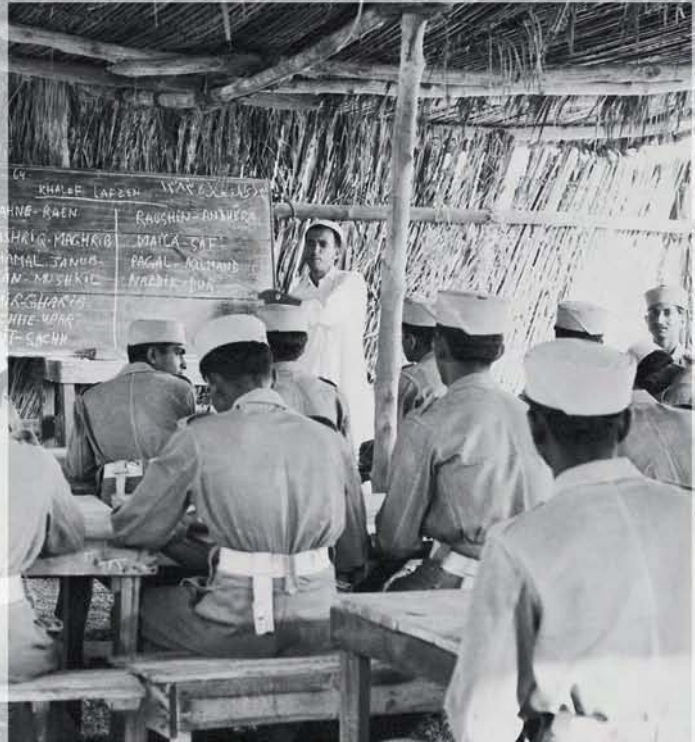


Recruits at SAF Training Centre on the range





A recruit at SAFTC preparing for inspection

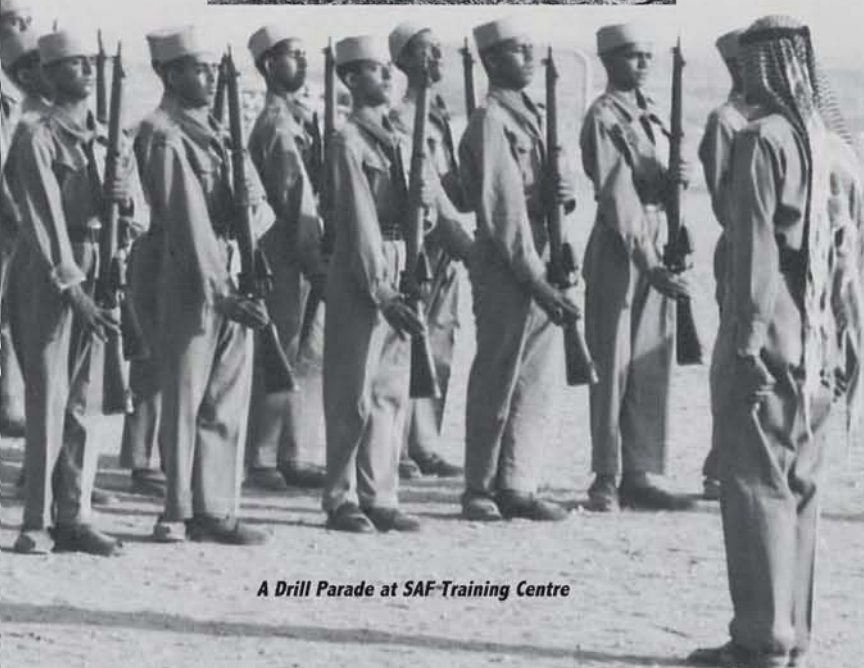


Education at SAF Training Centre

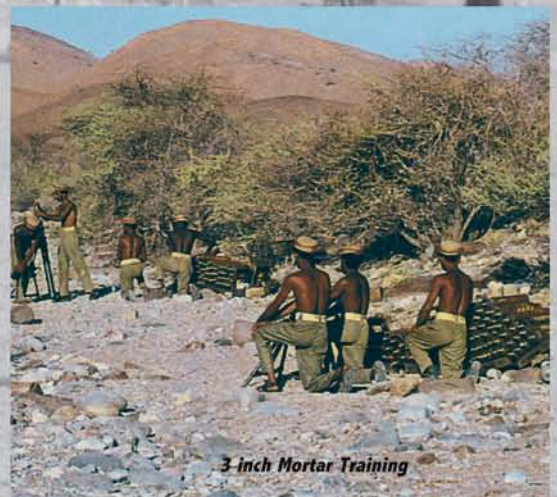


Wireless Training on the No. 19 set

Potential NCOs of NFR tackle an assault course as part of their Junior NCO's course at Nizwa



A Drill Parade at SAF Training Centre



3 inch Mortar Training

COUNTERING THE MINE THREAT

Despite the end of open hostilities, hard core rebels continued to harass SAF by laying mines along the major routes. Intelligence sources were constantly on the hunt for information about mine-layers and where they had laid them and the SIOs/DIOs and their teams played an important role in this respect.

SAF got a major break on 17 August 1962 when a British Royal Navy Ship, on routine patrol in the Gulf of Oman, intercepted a suspicious dhow off Ra's al-Suwadi. On board was a rebel leader, who had been controlling dissident operations in Oman, and four of his subordinates. A search of the dhow revealed .303 rifles with ammunition, .38 pistols with ammunition, wireless transceivers, grenades, time pencils, detonators, fuses, and armourers' tools. In addition a number of mines had been thrown overboard during the chase. Using information gathered from the prisoners, two major operations were mounted by SAF in central Oman which successfully captured more men and recovered caches of mines, explosives, and rifles. The discoveries continued into 1963 and destroyed the so-called 'Rebel Passive Wing' in Oman, thus effectively breaking the back of the Oman Revolutionary Movement (ORM) inside Oman.



Clockwise from left: A civilian 3 tonner at Ghobra, Tanuf, just after it hit a mine; Searching for a mine near Tanuf, 1960; A self-confessed minelayer - having lifted a mine near Buraimi; Two mines recovered near Bilad Sait, with a captured minelayer on the left in shackles; Lifting a mine near Buraimi



Mining in Oman - 1 January 1958 to 31 March 1961

MINES	1958	1959	1960	1961	Total
Exploded	74	35	20	6	135
Found	14	20	16	3	53
Captured	-	-	74*	-	74
Surrendered	1	-	44	4	49

TOTAL MINES

311

(*Includes 60 mines captured by Royal Navy Ship)

CASUALTIES	1958	1959	1960	1961	Total
Military killed					
Officers	1	-	-	-	1
Other ranks	2	1	1	1	5
Military wounded					
Officers	6	3	2	-	11
Other ranks	33	21	7	4	65
Civilians killed	-	1	2	3	6
Civilians injured	7	3	2	9	21
Military vehicles	56	24	16	5	101
Civilian vehicles	15	10	4	1	30

Animals: 1 camel and 1 donkey in 1958, 1 camel in 1959



SAF Patrols roamed far and wide over both the interior and the Batinah. Patrols visited the desert regions as well as the Sharqiyah.

One such SAF Patrol pioneered the first road route through to Sur in November 1960. However, this was not without opposition, as the local tribesmen, fearing the loss of camel traffic if the vehicle road went through, picqueted the hills in the Umm al Luqum area and actually fired on the NFR troops. However, negotiations with the locals were successful and the convoy eventually reached Sur to be greeted by the Wali and inhabitants.



Left: Negotiations with locals near Umm Al Luqum, 12 November 1960. They later fired on the column, fearing the vehicle road would cause a loss of camel traffic on the route to Sur

Above: CO NFR sending a signal to HQ SAF following the shooting incident

OPENING UP THE INTERIOR



Left: NFR convoy arriving in Sur, 15 November 1960, and erecting a radio aerial on the beach. This was the first road convoy to get through via the Sharqiyah



Above and below: NFR soldiers and MR Assault Pioneer Platoon building a road through to Sur, November 1960



Left: A welcome from the Wali of Sur on the arrival of the NFR convoy. L to R: Sayyid Majid bin Taimur (half brother to the Sultan), Wali of Sur and his son, CO NFR, DIO Nizwa, CO MR



THE EXPANSION OF SAF TAKES EFFECT

MR Released from Garrison Duties

MR, or as previously known, MI, throughout its existence served as little more than the garrison for the Muscat area and provided guards for vital points around the capital. With the establishment of an Independent Guard Unit in 1960, as part of the new Muscat Garrison (MUSGAR), MR were finally released from their Guard Duties to retrain as a proper Infantry Battalion and moved to a new camp at Bid Bid.



Clockwise from left: The Platoon Post at Bilad Sait. This had been established in August 1957 when the Imam retired to the village, to stop rebels using the village as a rallying point. It remained a military post until 1971, when it was abandoned; The first military camp at Bid Bid - MR's tented lines - 1961; An NFR soldier on 'public duties' mounting the guard outside Nizwa Fort. The Army provided a guard on the fort from its capture in 1957 and continued to do so until the late 1960s

Rotation of Infantry Battalions

With the transformation of MR from a Garrison Force to a normal Infantry Battalion, a policy of rotation of battalions between Nizwa and Bid Bid commenced in 1962. The Nizwa Battalion had Rifle Companies or elements of them stationed at Ibri, Saiq, Birkat al Mawz and Bilad Sait, whilst the Bid Bid Battalion had companies based at Izki and Rustaq. The Battalions were armed with SMLE rifles, Bren guns and 2-inch mortars. With the continuing efforts by the Oman Revolutionary Movement (ORM) to undermine the Sultan's authority in the interior, the infantry battalions were fully engaged in operations involving patrols, cordon-and-searches and ambushes.



SAF Personnel by Nationality, 1964						
Unit	Omani	Baluch (Local - Gwadar)	British	Pakistani	Total	
HQ SAF	43	29	82	19	51	224
Gar/Gd Coy	13	21	152	-	4	190
Arty Tp	-	5	40	1	4	50
SAFTC	42	6	88	4	-	140
MR	195	39	355	11	10	610
NFR	257	27	364	11	12	671
OG	249	29	-	5	-	283
Coastal Ptl	-	14	-	1	-	15
Total	799	170	1081	52	81	2183



Top: OG Detachment at Awabi Fort. The military occupied Awabi Fort in 1958 initially with MR, who handed the duties to OG in 1961. This controlled access to the Wadi Bani Kharus, which was a main rebel re-supply route. The post was finally abandoned in 1971

Above: Inspection and parade of the NFR Camel Troop before setting out on patrol



Above: The Wali of Ibri inspects NFR troops at their Ibri Camp

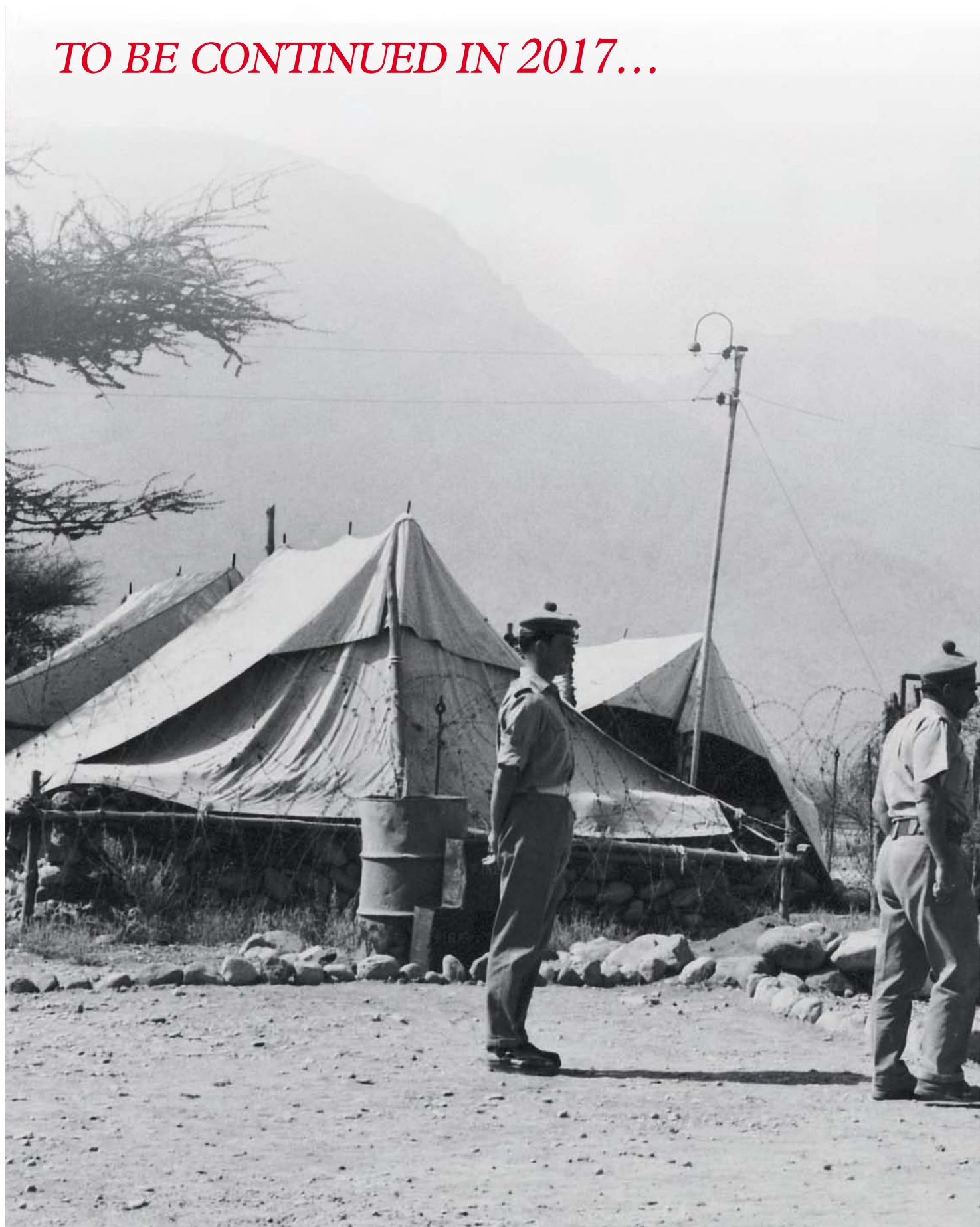
Right: NFR soldier patrolling the streets of Nizwa



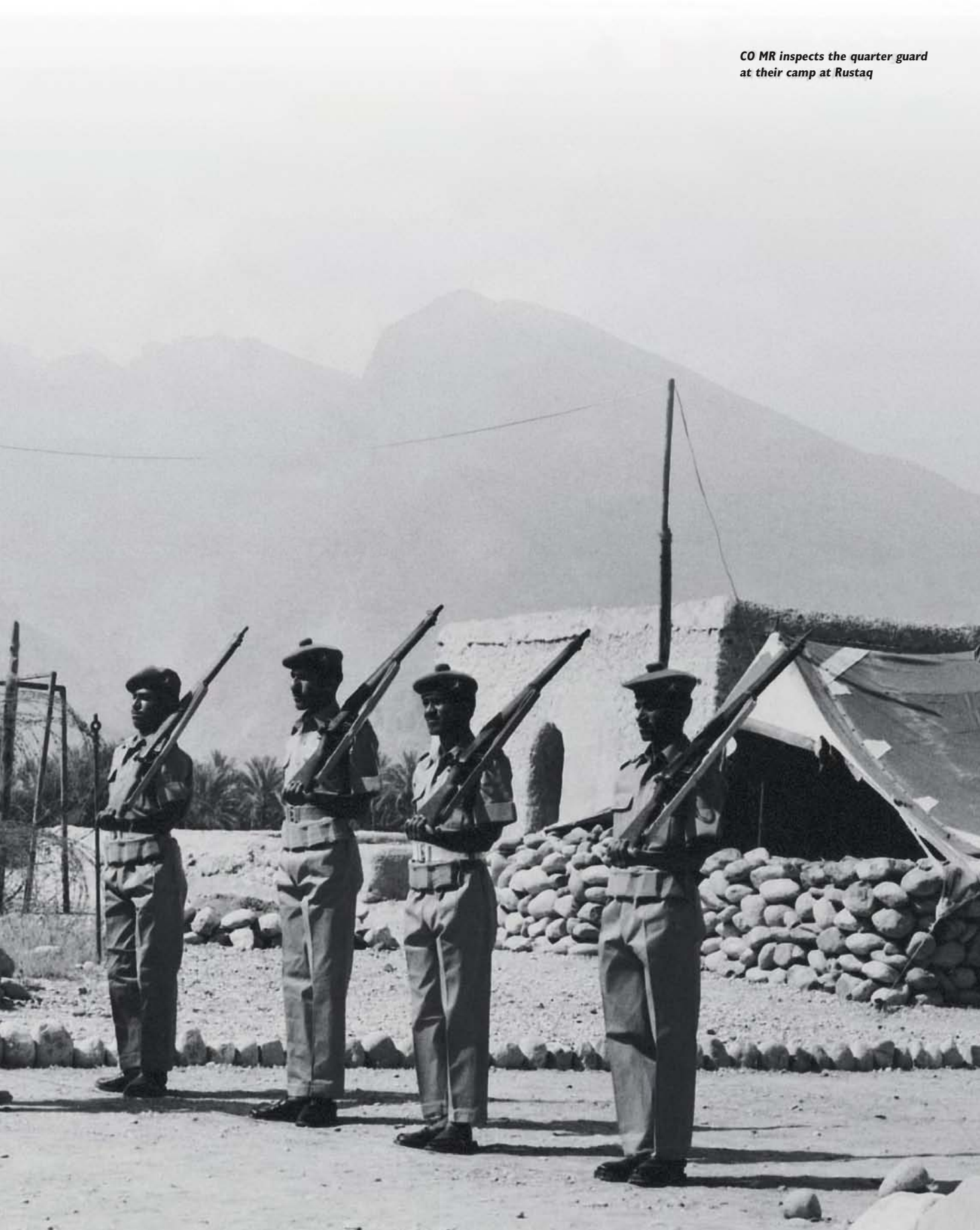
Above: C Coy NFR parade for the Wali of Ibri, July 1961

Left: MR Camp at Izki, 1965

TO BE CONTINUED IN 2017...



*CO MR inspects the quarter guard
at their camp at Rustaq*





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